

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE-COAST**

**THE EVALUATION OF THE USE OF THE BIBLE BY THE  
TWELVE APOSTLES' CHURCH AS A BASIS FOR  
DIVINATION: A CASE STUDY OF JOMORO AND  
ELLEMBELE TRADITIONAL AREAS**

**JOSEPH GYANVI-BLAY**

**JUNE 2010**

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**BY**

**JOSEPH GYANVI-BLAY**

**Dissertation submitted to the Department of Religion and Human  
Values of the faculty of arts, university of cape coast in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts  
degree in Religion and Human Values**

**JUNE 2010**

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

*I hereby declare that this dissertation is as a result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.*

Candidate's Name: Joseph Gyanvi-Blay

Signature: ..... Date: .....

### Supervisors' Declaration

*I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.*

Principal Supervisor' Name: Dr. Yaw Sarkodie Agyemang

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## ABSTRACT

One of the bases of the Twelve Apostles' Church for practising divination is the story of Saul consulting Samuel in 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26. Some Christian churches believe that the concept of divination is not biblical and must be condemned since it is a key element of the African traditional religion. This study therefore uses the Twelve Apostles' Church in Nzema area as a case study to find out whether divination as practised by the Twelve Apostles' Church has any biblical justification.

The Twelve Apostles' Church emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit, has a flexible liturgy, a prominent place for women. The Church also uses sacred articles like the water, candles, incense, white clothes, erects crosses and so on.

The Twelve Apostles' Church defines divination as a means of communicating with God for him to reveal sources of problems and prescribe solutions to them. The types of divination employed are; prayers, the use of the holy cup, the use of the tasbih, carrying basins of water and the use of the Bible.

Evaluating the passage, 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 three instances of divination by Samuel are observed. Samuel received a message about Saul through a night dream, chose an Israelite king by casting lots and located Saul by the help of Urim and Thummim. The issue that remains unresolved is whether or not the people of the Twelve Apostles' Church use the spirit of God in practicing divination or not.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved wife Mrs. Philomina Blay and my son God's Power Egya-Blay.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the study**

“The failure of Christianity to enter into a constructive dialogue with African traditional cultures and religion has long been recognized. The consequence of this theological deficit is the inability of most African Christians to reconcile their worldview with the type of Christianity professed by Western Christian missionaries in Africa” (Omenyo 2006, p.3). This deficit mentioned above is noted to be the main setback of the impact of the foreign missionary.

The missionary policy was forged, according to Kalu (2005), amidst the competing claims of colonial ambition, evangelical spirituality and obligation to the indigenous people and that the texture of colonial Christianity contained four strands that would challenge the indigenous people and evoke responses (pp.260-261). Such responses are the various views contained in historical accounts by Kalu, Asamoah-Gyadu, Debrunner and many more. These are:

(a) The character of the missionary presence exhibited in such varied contexts as the mission centers in Southern and Central Africa, the protection of settler communities in the Eastern Africa

and the increasing rejection of the large space that Henry Venn advocated for African agency in West Africa.

(b) A cultural policy that despised indigenous realities and embedded racism in mission practice.

(c) The institutionalization of mission agencies that ignored the powerful resources of the Holy Spirit in the gospel which sapped the vigor of the original evangelical spirituality and encrusted the monopoly of decision making processes and the practice of faith.

(d) Translation of the scriptures exposed the underbelly or the weaknesses of the missionary enterprise and produced unintended consequences (Kalu 2005, p. 314).

Hoehle-Fatton argues (as cited in Kalu 2005, p. 314) out that the schism model was obvious in the history of East African Independent Churches. Members of the independent churches portray mission churches as the repositories of normative Christianity and the European missions are assumed to have set the standard from which rebellious, innovated, African led groups broke away (Kalu 2005, p. 314).

These groups of people, due to the factors mentioned above coupled with other details that would be discussed, broke away and formed their movements that laid special emphasis on spiritual healing, prophecy, visions and dreams, trances and exorcism (Kalu 2005, p. 314) .

The use of certain items like the rattles on the gourd and the gong-gong as musical instruments appealed to the African people and this is what really helped these breakaways and the initiation of these African-led movements. This brought about the emergence of the African prophets like Prophet William Wade Harris, from Liberia, Garrick Braide from Nigeria, Simon Kimbangu of Congo and many others across Africa between 1914 and 1921 (Kalu 2005, p. 314). The impact of such African prophets was so huge that it did not easily fade away even when they had left. Even though most of these prophets, like Prophet Wade Harris, did not form churches, their converts formed churches due to the impact their ministry had. As a result of Prophet William Wade Harris' missionary impact for instance, the Twelve Apostles' Church emerged and it is noted to be the first of the African Independence Churches (Baeta 1962, p. 9).

Prophet William Wade Harris worked with water, a cross, a book and a calabash (Breidenbach 1962, pp. 39, 41), which have been the precedence set for the converts who started the Twelve Apostles' Church to follow. The practice of divination, however, was not associated with the ministry of Prophet Harris and this study investigates how the practice came into being in the Twelve Apostles' Church.

### **Statement of the problem**

The Twelve Apostles' Church was founded by Grace Tane popularly known as Nana Grace Tane of Ankobra Mouth and John Nackabah of Essuawa near Enchi (Baeta 1962, p. 9). These two people were believed to be among the

early converts of Prophet William Wade Harris who has been the architect of many practices that have emerged over the years in the Church and are being practiced by the Church. This, especially, includes the concept of divination. Grace Tane and Nackabah drew their motivation from scriptural passages in 1 Samuel 9:1-10: 26 in which Saul consulted Samuel. Some other Christian churches believe that the concept of divination is not biblical and must be totally condemned since it is a key element of the African traditional religion.

The problem here is that even though there are some scriptures that condemn the practice, there are also some scriptures that support the practice. Those who condemn the practice of divination only use those scriptures that are against the practice without looking at those that support the practice. The problem has been compounded by the fact that most of the prophets or prophetesses, devotees or trainees and members cannot read and write so cannot even explain well the very things they do with the Bible. This has made it possible for people who condemn them to do so publicly. Most of the literature reviewed does not contain anything about their doctrines or beliefs let alone to talk about the Church's position on divination.

Divination is relevant to the Charismatic Ministry even though it has been condemned for a very long time. It is about time the concept is openly accepted and people educated on it. This will help to draw the lines between what constitutes evil and what is beneficial to Christianity. The study will educate the public on the context in which divination was condemned and in what other context it was approved for men of God including Samuel to make use of. This

study therefore is to use the Twelve Apostles' Church in Nzema area (Ellembele and Jomoro Traditional Areas) as a case study to find out whether divination as practiced by the Twelve Apostles' Church has any biblical justification.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were the following:

- 1) To find out the perspective of the Twelve Apostles' Church concerning the story in 1 Sam 9-10:26.
- 2) To do an exegesis of 1 Sam 9-10:26.
- 3) To compare the exegesis of the text with its actualization in the Twelve Apostles' Church.
- 4) To delve into the concepts of divination hoping to ascertain the relevance of the practice to Christianity in this era.

### **Literature review**

This part of the study reviews literature under the topics like the social and religious situation during the advent of the African prophets, the prophetic revivals and the rise of the African independent churches, comments and perceptions of some people of the mission of the African prophets and the independent churches, some practices in the Twelve Apostles' Church, the concept of divination, relevance of divination to modern Christian.



## **The social and religious situation during the advent of the African prophets in Africa**

According to Omenyo (2006), most missionaries came to the Gold Coast or Africa from a rationalistic point of view (any view which only emphasizes on logical reasoning and disregards anything spiritual), disregarding the supernatural. These missionaries' attitude of superiority and discrimination really made the effectiveness of the missionary enterprise a non-starter (pp.43, 44). The social situation was full of racial discrimination. This racial discrimination by the Europeans coupled with slave trade weakened the confidence of the African and this made the foreigners consider the African as a weakling.

There was a lot of colonial intrusion which was resisted in Africa by force of arms. The Shona-Ndebele war during 1896-1897 against the British intrusion, for instance produced many casualties in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Later the king of the people of Shona-Ndebele had to come to a certain compromise to save lives (Davidson 1978 pp.150-152). Unlike the people of Rhodesia, the Luo people of Kenya offered no resistance to British rule but believed that the "Red strangers" which were the British had been sent with divine intention and for good. This belief later turned out bad when the clan system of the indigenous people was changed to community system of the British. This change was not acceptable to the indigenous people. Davidson (1978) reports that the British saw the indigenous people as "savages" that needed to be "civilized". In 1905, the Maji Maji war led by a man called Kanjikitile erupted in Southern Tanganyika to protest against the German coercion (pp.150-152).

Concerning the social situation in Africa, J.D Fage (1969) also says that there was a slave trade in place before the eighteenth century. During this period, some Europeans exported some Africans from the coast of West African countries across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe and America for sale as slaves. During the period of slave trade, some of the slaves were executed for petty theft, imprisoned for debts, flogged in the name of maintaining discipline and some forcibly taken to serve in the navy. This continued until 1772 when slavery was abolished in England (p.111). This situation might have created a desperate need for a deliverer who could find a solution to the situation, hence the emergence of African prophets or prophetesses.

Kalu (2005) also says that there was racial segregation and exploitation in the colonial period. At that time, colonialism was not only administrative but a psychological instrument to wound and to humiliate the souls of the Africans (p.274). Asamoah-Gyadu (2000) perceives the people to have taken to “double insurance” a situation where people attended the mission churches and also consulted a “Tigare”, an anti-witchcraft cult for protection (p.42). At the time when colonization was humiliating the African, one would have expected a people who brought a true gospel to provide a place of hope and protection for them but that did not happen. Even though the people saw the need to attend the few mission churches, they still had to go in for anti-witchcraft protection.

Breidenbach (1962) mentions that in the Nzema area, there were only a few Methodist outposts at Benyin and Axim due to the ecological situation and as such the people lacked missionaries. In view of this, the people continued to

worship and offer sacrifices to Tano, the river god (p.33). There were a lot of hostilities in the Gold Coast but from Haliburton's observation (1971 p.9), the French Catholics managed to work in Elmina in 1880. This was the social and religious situation across Africa from which the African prophets emerged.

From the literature so far, it can be deduced that the missionaries did not have that humble and the loving attitude that Christ had towards the people he ministered to so their ministry did not make the needed impact on the people. Even though these missionaries were preaching at the time, there was still a kind of thirst created in the hearts of people which created the need for the emergence of these African prophets. It could also be deduced that the kind of ministry that the missionaries brought could not be packaged to suit the desire of the natives that dealt with spiritual powers which were used to unravel unknown circumstances. This is why the people continued to offer sacrifices to the river gods even though the people heard the gospel of the missionaries.

### **The prophetic revivals and the rise of the African independent churches in Africa**

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2000), the first wave of Pentecostal Christianity began in spontaneous reaction to the meteoric rise and parallel activity of a number of those prophets that arose in Africa. The prophets' appearance caused great religious stirrings in the Gold Coast in particular and Africa in general (p.19). Some of those prophets who emerged between 1914 and 1937 were William Wade Harris, John Swatson, Sampson Oppong as well as

Garrick Braide (Omenyo 2006, p.67). Garrick Braide, William Wade Harris and others were unwilling to establish churches but anxious to save souls through the word and miracles (p.285). This led to ‘revivals’. Kalu (2005) defines revival as “a response to the character of Christian living and a message that may reflect the impact of secular forces as people seek answers from religious sphere” (p.285). From this definition, five different types of revivals that swept through Africa could be derived. These are:

(a) A traditional leader becoming Christian leader and creating new movements.

(b) A Christian coming out to emphasize the pneumatic component of scripture.

(c) People in the main line churches discovering the pneumatic (Holy Spirit) resources and starting as praying movements.

(d) A group of Christians from the main line churches enlarging the role of the Holy Spirit within faith and practice, experiencing a hostile attack from the church.

(e) The Pentecostal Charismatic experience.

Some of those prophets who gave rise to some of these types of revivals are Kimpa Vista from East Africa for type (a), Prophets William Wade Harris, Garrick Braide of Nigeria, Simon Kimbangu of Congo and Joseph Babalo of Nigeria all in type (b), John Nackabah and Grace Tane starting as members of the

Methodist Church of type (c), Balokole revival in the Anglican Church in Kenya for type (d) (Kalu 2005, p.285). Kalu's (2005) research has it that, David Shank portrayed (as cited by Kalu 2005 p.288) the impact of such personalities as being "an authentic Christian universality and yet a diversity of Africanity"(quoted from the author) (p.288). There were some of the African prophets who rose up and went ahead to form churches. From Kalu's research, these churches were known by Herold Turner and John Peel (cited in Kalu 2005, p.317) as African Independent Churches. Some of these churches are the Church of the Lord-Aladura established by Josiah Ositelu, Celestial Church of Christ by Samuel Oschoffa, and Cherubim and Seraphim by Moses Orimolade Tunolase all of Nigeria. Other African Independent Churches that emerged in Ghana were Musama Disco Christo Church by Jemisemiham Jehu-Appiah, the Saviour Church by Samuel Brako, the Apostles' Revelation Society by Charles Kobla Nutomutu Wovenu, African Faith Tabernacle Congregation by James Kwame Nkansah and the Twelve Apostles' Church by John Nackabah and Grace Tane (Omenyo 2006, p.317).

Grace Tane and John Nackabah teamed up to establish the Twelve Apostles' Church. The name is derived from the fact that twelve apostles were appointed by Prophet Harris to man the affairs of every village after completing his evangelistic mission there (Baeta 1962, p.9).

All these churches were prompted by "Ethiopianism" which called for Africans to free themselves of Europeans and a quest for a place for identity, self respect and to nurse the African back to her glory. Due to this, they rejected

European baptismal names, and accepted the use of African clothes, praying for chiefs instead of the British monarch, accepted polygamists as members, as well as contested missionary polity, liturgy and ethics (Kalu 2005, p.273). According to an article by Mwaura (2005), these churches emphasized charismatic and pneumatic experience, healing, African symbolism, music and instruments and leadership pattern. Those African Independent Churches also became sites for women's liberation from suppression and fear of witchcraft (p.285).

From the literature above, there were revivals that arose in Africa. These revivals came as a result of the discovery of the charismatic and pneumatic experience. Even though the African Independence Churches were those that stirred up such revivals, the literature reviewed does not appreciate that. Again, it can be deduced from the above literature, the various revivals that swept through Africa came as a result of the desire for a change out of suppression into a kind of freedom. This desire led to the discovery of the Holy Spirit in faith and practice. The discovery of the Holy Spirit in the activities of the prophets and the prophetesses that arose strengthened their prayer life and made their prayer more powerful to solve the problems of followers. During the ministration of such African prophets and prophetesses, their prayer did not only eradicate problems but also revealed their root causes before their eradication and hence justifying the need for divination in their ministry.

## **Comments and perceptions of some people of the mission of the African prophets and the Independent Churches.**

Several people made a lot of comments on the mission of the African prophets and the Independent Churches. Some of these comments were encouraging and others negative and derogatory. Some of these comments are going to be discussed. The encouraging comments are first going to be dealt with.

A leading politician resident in Axim, J.E. Casely-Hayford who met Prophet William Wade Harris, made several comments, one of which is stated as follows:

The soul of William Wade Harris moves in a higher plane. He is a dynamic force of rare order. He will move his age in a way few have done... (Men) will yet realize a West African high in the spiritual sphere. And it will be the work of William Wade Harris. You come to him with a heart full of bitterness and when he has finished with you all the bitterness is gone out of your soul (Debrunner 1967, p.267).

This comment was based on the miracles the prophet performed, the dynamism with which the prophet preached and even the way he ministered to those who came to him with their problems.

Rev W.J. Platt, a British Methodist missionary in Dahomey (present day Benin) who went to La Cote d'Ivoire was fired up with enthusiasm and reported the work of Prophet William Wade Harris in London to create a mild sensation.

He saw Harris as an evangelist who wanted to save souls for Jesus (Zarwan 1975, p.274). Zarwan (1975) observes that his movement in La Cote d'Ivoire became important as historical mission churches like Catholic or Protestant claimed more adherents than the traditionalists and cults (p.274).

Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide's mission was so powerful that many sick people were healed through his ministry. Rev M. A. Kemmer, a priest of St Andrew Catholic Church in New Calabar was excited by the increase in his membership as a result of Garrick Braide's ministry. The people in New Calabar pronounced him as a second Elijah and in addition to this, Rev. Kemmer made a statement as follows: "was never any instance where Garrick Braide consented to pray for any sick person in which prayers failed to be efficacious" to express his appreciation to the impact made by the ministry of the prophet (Kalu 2005, p.288). Such comments are relevant in the sense that it would be known in the study that prayer is the active ingredient of divination. It is during prayer that secrets are revealed for them to be solved.

In spite of all these good reports and comments, some people perceived and commented negatively on the ministry of the prophets and the Independent Churches. Hans Debrunner (1967, p269) rather has a negative perception which goes like this: "some people saw Harris in retrospect as a "super fetish priest" fighting battles in the air at Kikam in Nzema and destroying with fire from heaven" (Debrunner 1967, p.269). John Zarwan (1975) also says that the Catholic clergy in La Cote d'Ivoire were initially neutral but later became hostile to Harris since he was later considered as an outpost of foreign Protestantism (p.274). The



people also took him to be someone who had raised an anti-government political movement and also a charlatan. This called the attention of Governor G. Angoulvant to interview the prophet. Harris was also perceived to have raised a movement of an independent Christian church or a separatist movement, a proto-nationalist movement, a church resistant to colonialism of frustrated ambition and of political protest in a religious form (p.274).

Breidenbach (1962) also reports that many of such movements of Prophet Harris, faced colonial oppression or the standard of “orthodox theology” (pp.34, 39). There was oppression or suppression of the African Independent Churches such that when the Twelve Apostles’ Church started the Apostolic Church sent Rev. James Mckeown to inspect their activities in order to be considered for financial assistance. The pastor asked them to do away with the African rattles and to replace them with the Western tambourines. They initially pleaded with Rev. Mckeown that the rattles be allowed but since the appeal was not heeded to, the Twelve Apostles’ Church decided to go their separate way or dissociate themselves from the Apostolic Church (Baeta 1962, p.16). Some foreign missionaries condemned some African religious practices that they did not understand and classified them as evil. Such a negative posture might be the reason for condemning African prophets and their ministry and not because they were evil. Even though these foreigners condemned the practice of divination because it was an element of the African Traditional Religion, the Twelve Apostles’ Church identified with the Old Testament prophets including Samuel who made use of it. Rev Mckeown’s mission with the Church would have been a

fulfilled prophecy of Prophet Harris foretelling about the coming of the foreign missionary to his converts to teach them. This opportunity was missed due to the negative posture maintained by these foreign missionaries.

The somewhat intimate relationship between the colonial government and the missionaries was detrimental to the existence of the emerging indigenous churches. The colonial administration displayed a cold and spiteful posture to the Aladura Churches in Nigeria (Kalu 2005, p.318). In Kalu's (2005) research, Captain Ross, a colonial officer resident at Oyo, saw the indigenous churches as churches that must not be recognized as Christian mission and as such should be regarded as enemies which should be banned (p.318). From the literature, these Aladura churches were prayer movements that brought solutions to the problems of the people. Through those prayers, the root causes of problems were revealed and then those problems were dealt with through prayers. This made divination relevant at the time.

There were negative comments, attitudes and perception from the Western colonial masters, and missionaries towards the African prophets and the Independent Churches right from the beginning of their ministry and the establishment of their churches respectively. Such comments, in my opinion, were not from the biblical point of view but all the same, the Independent Churches are in present times, still being regarded as demonic. Instead of despising them, the missionaries should have seen the Independence Churches as part of God's people and began to teach them the word so as to have pointed out the extremes that their practices were getting to.

### **Some practices in the Twelve Apostles' Church**

From Baeta (1962), the Twelve Apostles' Church was founded by Grace Tane and John Nackabah who were baptized by Prophet William Wade Harris and their ministry was believed to have been fashioned according to some practices of the prophet (p.16). According to Breidenbach (1962), the prophet wore a white gown, had a cross around his neck, and held a Bible, a cup and a staff. He was seen using water in a cup and raising the cup to the sky during a purification process and this was what the missionaries saw to be baptism. He was also seen holding a cross which was used to cast out demons (pp.34, 39) and was also seen to have a calabash that when it was shaken amidst singing could cast out demons. This music produced ecstasy during which secret things were revealed. These are some of the practices inherited from Prophet Harris but the literature gathered did not indicate the practice of divination by the use of instrument by the prophet.

From the literature gathered so far, the practice of divination by the use of instrument did not originate from Prophet Harris but from Grace Tane, John Nackabah and other founding members. This might be due to their previous experience. Grace Tane came from a background where she used to serve the Tano god in giving medicine to pregnant women and John Nackabah was also a traditional priest (Breidenbach 1962, pp.34, 39). This traditional practice of divination was what was believed by some scholars to have been introduced into the Twelve Apostles' Church. This African traditional practice might also be in line with the biblical tradition at the time of Samuel.

## **The concept of divination**

The concept of divination plays a crucial part not only in revealing the meaning of misfortune but more importantly in prescribing the ritual means to counter their effects (Asamoah-Gyadu 2000, p.40). According to Burnnett (1988), divination is the means by which a society seeks to determine the origin of a misfortune and then to prescribe the appropriate answer to that. He explains further by using Victor Turner's research on the Ndembu people (as cited by David Burnnett 1988, p108) to illustrate how to bring into the open what are hidden or unknown (p.108). The *New Bible Dictionary* also defines divination as the attempt to discern events distant in time or space that consequently cannot be perceived by normal means (Mashall, Millard, Packer, & Wiseman 2001, p.279). The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* also defines divination as the attempt to discern future events by such means as trance, vision or physical objects (Pfeiffer, C. F, Howard, Vos, and F, Rea, J. 2003, p.468).

From the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, the types of divination mentioned in the Bible are:

- (a) Rhabdomancy, throwing sticks or arrows into the air.
- (b) Hepatoscopy, examination of the liver of animal.
- (c) Teraphim, uses of images.
- (d) Necromancy, communicating with the dead.
- (e) Astrology, reading of stars.

- (f) Hydromancy, comprising divination with water either by noting the reflections or inducing a trance (Pfeiffer, C. F, Howard, Vos, F, and Rea, J. 2003, p.468).

*The New Bible Dictionary* adds casting of lots with the help of *urim* and *thummim* and through dreams to the list (Mashall, Millard, Packer, and Wiseman 2001, p.279).

From Klaus Koch (1971), divination is broadly classified into two forms namely Inductive or Instrumental divination and Intuitive or Mediated divination where a human medium passes on direct inspiration through his voice (p.7). Evans-Pritchard (1972) rather lays emphasis on the technique of uncovering the unknown by saying that it is the methods or techniques of making the discovery of what is unknown, which in normal cases, cannot be known by experiment and logic (p.11).

G. K. Nukunya (2003) defines divination as the manipulation of certain special objects to fore tell the future, discover the unknown or interpret events (p.285). Divination can also be defined as the practice of attempting to fore tell the future, reveal the unknown, or find out the wish of a divinity or spirit (Awolalu, Dopamu and Ademulo 1979, p.147).

Mbiti (1991) sees divination as the method of finding out the unknown by means of pebbles, numbers, water, animal entrails, reading the palms, throwing dice and so on (pp.57-59). This definition also emphasizes methods and even includes some of the possible techniques that exist as far as African traditional

practices are concerned. Mbiti (1991) further differentiates between the use of terminologies such as a diviner and a seer. According to him, diviners have the knowledge of using some unseen forces of the universe and to be a diviner one needs to spend longer time training in different methods of divination. Seers, on the other hand, have the natural power to see certain things which are not easily known to other people and even foresee events before they occur. In this case, they do not require any special training (pp.57-59). The implication gathered from this differentiation is that seers have the divine innate ability to operate while the diviners' ability to operate is derived from their training (Mbiti 1991, p.66). This view might only be the case in African Traditional Religion for it might not apply to Samuel's case. In the case of Samuel, even though he had the divine ability to operate, he had to go through training to develop his gift and be taught how to identify God's voice by Eli. Samuel himself had a school of prophets that he had to train to become seers like himself (1 Sam. 10:5, 10; Mbiti 1991, p.66).

Mbiti (1991) goes on to say that the African people feel inadequate sometimes to go before the Supreme God directly and so the people will go before God through either an intermediary man, an oracle, who is a prophet or prophetess or through a lesser deity. With this mentality, as the people pray through the prophets, they accompany their prayers with sacrifices or offerings (p.66). Even though they know that God will not literally eat or make use of the sacrifice, it is to show their humility before God, the seriousness of their problem and perhaps how desperate they are. The sacrifices are also meant to draw the attention of God to their needs. From this, it can be deduced that this African

traditional practice is in line with the Jewish tradition of consulting men of God and also going with gifts or offerings as was the case in 1 Sam 9:1-10: 26 (Mbiti 1991, p.66).

Awuah-Nyamekye (2001) also defines divination as a human attempt to know the will of the divine. This includes every initiative from humans to know the unknown. Some of the initiatives to know the unknown can be demonstrated in some divinatory practices by the people of Berekum traditional area that have been mentioned as follows: water and mirror gazing, carrying of the corpse, examining animal entrails, throwing a dice, prayer, dreams, meditation, getting possessed, divining by the use of stick and pot, by horn, sand and pestle etc. Different forms of trial by ordeal are also mentioned which include walking on broken glasses barefooted, drinking boiling oil or a ritually prepared concoction (pp.3, 77).

A divinatory process which will be relevant to this study in the Twelve Apostles' Church is a type of hydromancy similar to water gazing that has already been described in Breidenbach's research (1962, pp.34, 39). In his research, one observes that Prophet William Wade Harris was seen raising a cup of water to the sky which is believed by Breidenbach (1962) to be a purification process and by the missionaries as baptism, spirit possession, dreams, prayers, and meditation (pp.34,39).

Kwesi Dickson (1984) observes that there is a cultural continuity between Israel and Africa. In other words, the African prophets who arose in the midst of

imposition of European Christian values and beliefs related and identified with the Old Testament since the African tradition had many common grounds with the Jewish traditions in the Old Testament (pp.145-167). He further explains that Africans have suffered from oppression as a result of slave trade, colonialism and racist politics which corresponds to the people of Israel suffering from Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian slavery in the Old Testament (1984, pp.145-167). Due to this cultural continuity between Israel and Africa, the African prophets and prophetesses easily identified with the traditions of the Old Testament times, especially divination. This background makes one appreciate the need for a deliverer or someone who can be used as an instrument by God to solve problems.

Secondly, the Africans came from a background where there are many prohibitions like the food taboos corresponding to those animals that are unclean in Leviticus chapter 11, rituals and festivals and moral rules which govern their lives (Dickson 1984, pp.145-167). One clear example is a woman becoming unclean for three days when she gives birth to a male and two weeks for a female found in Leviticus 12:2ff. This background makes it easy for the Africans to appreciate the need for them to observe the Sunday as a day set aside for worship in a church service. I believe this background has helped the African prophets and prophetesses to have self control and the need for moral uprightness. This is relevant to divination in the sense that anyone who must be able to see or hear secrets from God must be morally upright and devoted to prayer.

Thirdly, Africans have a belief in spirit possession which is also found in the Old Testament. Kwesi Dickson (1984) defines spirit possession as God



putting a person in a position to act as his instrument. When this happens, the person has no alternative than to declare what God has asked his messenger to declare (pp.145-167). This was what happened when the spirit of God came upon prophets like Ezekiel and Jeremiah to make pronouncements that were introduced by the phrase “thus says the lord”. During the ministry of such prophets, even when they were being tortured and maltreated, they still could not hold their peace (1984, pp.145-167).

These common grounds or similarities between African beliefs and that of the Jews appealed to the Africans and as such those prophets who rose up, identified with the Old Testament and had their theology and practices built from the Old Testament which is also similar to the African traditional religion. In view of this, African Independent Churches as a whole and the Twelve Apostles’ Church in particular are motivated and attracted to the Old Testament tradition of consulting men of God, divination, and the presentation of sacrifices and offerings. It has already been established that divination can either be through a medium or the use of an instrument. The aim of consulting men or women of God is for them to reveal the root cause of problems through their ability to see or hear from God or use certain instrument to inquire from God. This is hence divination.

Another African belief which is common with the Jewish tradition is the induced spirit possession. This practice is found in the divinatory practice of the Twelve Apostles’ Church. Concerning spirit possession, Kwesi Dickson (1984) has it that in the case of the Jewish tradition and the Twelve Apostles’ Church

(representing the African), an ecstatic state may be induced through the use of music (pp.145-167).

With regards to the practice of consulting men of God, Anderson (1988) states that Israel had sanctuaries at Bethel or Jerusalem where there were prophets who had special services in their worship. These sanctuaries are the “Gardens” of the Twelve Apostles’ Church which accommodate patients and are also used for services by the Twelve Apostles’ Church. Those prophets were regarded as experts in intercessory prayers and hence received people’s petitions before Yahweh. Those people acted as spokespersons of God, communicated the divine answers to the people and also determined the quality of sacrifice during religious festivals (p.168). The role played by these spokespersons is not alien to African beliefs and this is what is seen in the divinatory practices of the Twelve Apostles Church.

The practice of divination, therefore, in itself, deducing from all that has been said above, might not be wrong but the bottom line is the type of spirit that will control the practice. If the spirit controlling the practice is not of the Lord, then it becomes evil. For one to know whether or not the spirit controlling a divinatory practice is of the Lord, in my opinion, one has to be told by the spirit of God. This cannot be determined or verified by logic, reasoning or any empirical way. This requires that one will be constantly praying to God and through this time of prayers, the spirit of God will communicate to the one to know the source of any spirit being used for divination instead of someone observing only by participation.

Looking at the circumstances surrounding the emergence of the mission of the African prophets and their associated practices discussed so far, it can be observed that, divination and other African practices were condemned due to the fact that the European missionaries were filled with the pride of being superior to the African and so wanted to suppress every indigenous tradition in order to perpetuate their own beliefs.

Kwesi Dickson (1984) further says that at various times in the history of the church, much feeling of dissatisfaction with the Old Testament has been expressed by people including the European missionaries in Africa (pp.145-167). This explains the reason why the African prophets who built a lot of their theologies from the Old Testament were totally condemned.

From what has been said so far, it can be also observed that any time there is a new move of the spirit of God through a people, the people of the established missions begin to resist such move by condemning their practices and activities. In view of this, it would not be surprising to have witnessed the kind of condemnation and persecution that the early charismatic movements suffered when it began in the main line churches in Ghana.

From the research so conducted so far divination has already been branded as a negative activity as none of them see the concept to be of relevance and worth researching into even though various definitions have been given. Again, the Twelve Apostles' Church is the church that discovered the use of the Holy Spirit in faith and practice in Christianity in Ghana and nothing seems to be

written about their doctrines so this study reveals what they believe and the biblical support for most of their practices including divination.

Thirdly, even though the Bible commentaries explain or give various positions of biblical interpretations of the passage (1 Sam 9:1-10:26), they are not applied to the Twelve Apostles' Church. The literature does not contain the Church's position and this makes this study relevant.

### **Relevance of divination to modern Christianity**

The Ghanaian, and for that matter the African Christian has come from a background where every event is believed to be mystically caused. In order to respond to this need to unravel the mystery surrounding misfortunes, divination became an active ingredient in the activities of the Twelve Apostles' Church (Asamoah-Gyadu 2000, p.40). When the African prophets emerged, the missionaries used the biblical texts below to condemn divination.

#### TEXT ONE

“Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:31).

## TEXT TWO

“If a person turns to mediums and wizards, playing the harlot after them, I will set my face against that person and cut him off from among his people” (Leviticus 20:6).

## TEXT THREE

“A man or woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood will be upon them” (Leviticus 20:27).

## TEXT FOUR

There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an auger, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever do ... For these nations, which you are about to dispossess, give heed to soothsayers and diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so (Deuteronomy 18:10-15).

In spite of all these injunctions, the Bible contains some passages that portray that divination was a normal practice of the people of Israel. Some of those passages to be discussed below are the motivations of the Twelve Apostles' Church.

The use of the divinatory cup by the Twelve Apostles' Church as described earlier might also have been derived from Genesis 44:4, 5 which says,

They had not gone far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, “Go after those men at once and when you catch up with them, say to them, why have you repaid good with evil? Isn’t this the cup the master drinks from and uses for divination?”

This means that Joseph’s cup was not an ordinary cup but might also be used as an instrument for divination. Joshua 7:16-19 also says;

So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe and the tribe of Judah was taken; and he brought near the families of Judah, and the family of Zerahite was taken; and he brought near the family of Zerahite man by man, Zabdi was taken; and he brought near his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

In the New Testament, Acts 1:26 says: “And they cast lot for them, and the lot fell on Matthias and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles”. This scripture implies that divination was not only practiced by the people of Israel in the Old Testament but also the followers of Christ. Casting of lots is a form of divination that the literature has already mentioned from *The New Bible Dictionary* and it is this method that was used by the apostles to elect a successor to Judas. What is clear here is that Christians overtly condemn the practice but covertly practice it. The main motivational text for the Twelve Apostles’ Church for divination is that in 1 Samuel 10:20 which says that Samuel brought all the

tribe of Benjamin which was selected by casting lots which is part of the story that is being considered in this study.

These biblical passages mentioned in favour of divination are believed to be some aspects of divination that can either be instrumental divination (divination by the use of instrument) or mediated divination that this study will investigate. Klaus Koch (1971) earlier talks about classifications which indicate that intuitive divination which is the type that deals with mediums who make plain the hidden and unknown while inductive or instrumental divination is the use of instrument to unveil the unknown (p.7).

With the classification of Klaus Koch stated above, the relevance of divination in contemporary Christianity would be such that the prophets of the Charismatic Churches act as mediums through which both present and future secrets are unveiled through visions, dreams, during prayer and fasting periods and even through their intuition. The concept of divination will be investigated to compare what goes on in the Twelve Apostles' Church and in the Charismatic Churches. This is to find out how similar or different the type of divination in the Twelve Apostles' Church is from that of the Charismatic Ministries.

From all the literature reviewed, even though a lot of research has been made on African Independence Churches in general not much has been on the Twelve Apostles' Church. C.G. Baeta (1962) only mentions some of the sacred items used by the Church and how the converts of Grace Tane and John Nackabah gathered to form a Church. Baeta's research did not even deal into detail with

their practices let alone to deal with their concept of divination. Breidenbach (1964) did a detailed piece on the Church but limited his work on how the healing ministry takes place. His research fails to deal with the Church's concept of divination, does not explain how the divination process takes place and the types of divination that take place in the Church. In view of these short falls the study seeks to deal with the church's concept of divination, discuss the types of divination practiced by the Church, do an exegesis of one of their popular motivational scriptural passages 1 Sam 9:1-10:26 and to discuss some of its relevance to both the Church and the Charismatic Ministry and to the Nzema society.

### **The purpose of the study**

“How do you make a choice between two or more options? How do you find out the cause of a misfortune? What happens when something goes wrong?” (Burnnett 1988, p.107) These are the questions that one answers everyday and the purpose of this study is to evaluate the use of the Bible (using 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 as the main text) by the Twelve Apostles' Church as a basis for divination, using the Nzema (Ellembele and Jomoro Traditional areas) area as a case study.

The purpose of the study will be to:

- Bring out some of the doctrines and practices of the Twelve Apostles' Church.
- Explain the biblical tradition surrounding the consultation of men of God and the practice of divination by men of God.



- Identify the kind of divination practiced by the Twelve Apostles' Church.
- Compare the practice of divination by the Twelve Apostles' Church to the biblical tradition and the relevance of divination to modern Christianity.

### **Significance of the study**

The study is to add to the existing stock of knowledge on divination in particular and biblical exegesis in general. Divination here will be presented from the point of view of the Twelve Apostles' Church. The way this Church practices divination and the impact divination has made on the people will inform readers about the benefits and the problems encountered by the members of the Twelve Apostles' Church. In this study, knowledge about how divination is applied by Christians will confirm the fact that even though Christians condemn divination, at least the Twelve Apostles' Church applies it in a number of ways. This education will create the attitude of tolerance in Christians to people of other beliefs. Again, some interpretation of 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 will also contribute to biblical interpretation.

### **Research methodology**

This study was conducted in the Twelve Apostles' Church of Ghana where divination is a very important concept. This is due to the fact that people believe that the process will help them to solve the problem of the patients who come there.

The research design used is case study. This is because the concept of divination investigated was in only the Twelve Apostles' Church in Nzema which comprises Jomoro and Ellembele Traditional Areas. A case study helped the researcher to do an in-depth study of the practice of divination by the Twelve Apostles' Church.

The population investigated was the people of the Twelve Apostles' Church in Nzema, Jomoro and Ellembele Traditional Areas in the Western Region of Ghana. Respondents were drawn from prophets or prophetesses, devotees or members under training into priesthood, the patients seeking treatment from various diseases and regular members. This also included both citizens and aliens who came to the "Garden" to seek help, those who have become regular members, devotees under training. A sample size of 100 was drawn and the break down was as follows:

Prophets	-	10
Prophetesses	-	10
Devotees	-	30
Inmates/Patients	-	40
Others members	-	10

This sample size was chosen on the assumption that the number is large enough to give a meaningful data. This number is also convenient to divide into the various categories of the target groups. These target groups were selected due

to the fact that prophets and prophetesses, devotees and other members are those that people contact so far as Twelve Apostles' Church is concerned.

The study is qualitative and as such every information given by any member is vital. In view of this, only a number in any group which may be sufficient to authenticate the information was selected. Some of the "Gardens" (the home of the *Osofo* accommodating sick patients and also having the temple of the Church for services) which in some of the towns, for example Krisan, which has the history that Grace Tane worked there as a prophetess, and other towns like Mbem, Allengenzule, Bonyere and Tikobo no. 2 being towns with prominent branches of the Church were selected.

Purposive sampling technique was used to choose some of these big churches mentioned above and those that have striking history like the Garden in Krisan. This is because with the big churches many people including patients visit the Garden and so many people could be interviewed. Those Gardens with striking history like Krisan, was purposely chosen since Grace Tane built that Garden and has the history of the woman and Prophet Wade Harris to support that of recorded version.

Random sampling was also used to select other Gardens. These prominent churches are five in number. Apart from these five prominent branches of the Twelve Apostles' Church, five other towns, making a total of ten towns were randomly selected. In every town selected, one prophet, one prophetess, three devotees, four patients and one other member totaling 100, were randomly

interviewed. In dealing with spiritual things, not many people were willing to speak to the researcher so a small number like hundred over a wide area was easy to deal with and also to meet the targeted number and people.

Data was obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained from the field work through participant observation and interview. Specifically, the researcher attended the services of the Church on Fridays and Sundays to observe their activities and since the people are mostly non literates interview guide was used to interview the people. Apart from the fact that the respondents are mostly non literates, using Nzema, their dialect, made the researcher friendlier to the people and hence increasing the level of confidence in him by the respondents. Where possible, pictures were taken in the course of the study to support the evidence. The secondary source was literature that others have produced on the subject of divination and the activities of the African Independent Churches. Qualitative analysis was used in the research since the study is looking at a phenomenon and as such every piece of information about the phenomenon gives some aspects of the phenomenon of divination. In view of this no statistical table was required.

### **Delimitation of the study**

From the literature, it is revealed that the Twelve Apostles' Church came as a spill over of Prophet Harris's evangelical movement mostly in the Apollonian or Nzema area and so local churches of the Twelve Apostles' Church in this area were chosen as a case study. Although not all branches of the Church were

contacted, the major branches of the Twelve Apostles' Church in villages or towns in Jomoro and Ellembele Traditional Areas were visited. This study cited a lot of biblical passages which are the basis for divination in the Twelve Apostles' Church, however the study focused more on 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 as a basis for practicing divination.

### **Limitations of the study**

Some difficulties were encountered in the study. In the course of the visitation of the various "Gardens" of the Church some inmates and prophets were sceptical about the confidentiality of some information and so some of them felt reluctant to release any sensitive information. There were also some financial and time constraints that prevented the researcher from visiting as many "Gardens" as possible. In spite of all these limitations, efforts were made to gather enough data for a successful completion of the study.

### **Organization of the study**

The study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study. This comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, aims and objectives, review of literature, purpose of the study, the significance of the study, research methodology delimitations/limitations of the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter two deals with the emergence, practices and the doctrines of the Twelve Apostles' Church. Chapter three talks about enrolment into the priesthood of the Twelve Apostles' Church. Chapter four deals with the biblical interpretations of the passage (1 Samuel 9:1-10:26) by both biblical

scholars and by the Twelve Apostles' Church. Chapter five talks about the concept of divination in the Twelve Apostles' Church while Chapter six talks about divination and its relevance in the Twelve Apostles' Church and finally chapter seven deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **EMERGENCE, PRACTICES AND DOCTRINES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES' CHURCH**

#### **Introduction**

Prophet William Wade Harris used certain items like water to baptize people, a cross, a calabash in fetching water for baptism and a Bible for preaching. His preaching had so much impact on people's lives that he had so many converts which included Grace Tane and John Nackabah. In the ministry of Prophet Harris he did not condemn polygamy but was seen with two women. This made the missionary churches to reject some of his converts which included Grace Tane and John Nackabah. When Grace Tane and John Nackabah could no longer stay with the Methodist Church the two people joined to form their healing church which had many doctrines and practices which were absent in Prophet Harris' ministry which they called the Twelve Apostles' Church. This chapter deals with a brief history of the Twelve Apostles' Church, its characteristics, doctrines and liturgy.

## **A brief history of the Twelve Apostles' Church**

Prophet William Wade Harris made a tremendous impact on the lives of the people in Nzemaland. His coming to Half Assini and its environs brought a change in the area. The menstruating women who were previously segregated and quarantined in special huts began to sleep at home with their families. Bereaved spouses no longer stayed on the beach for eight days and many children were enrolled in schools (Haliburton 1971, p.75).

The impact of Prophet Harris brought great awakening in the Nzema area. Prophet Harris urged the people to throw away their charms and seek for an all powerful God. This change of behaviour is termed by Gray (1990) as “a theocratic organization of cosmos” (p.111). These charms and idols were thrown away and temples were built with bamboo in eagerness to wait for preachers and teachers (Debrunner 1967, p.269-277). His instruction to his converts was to wait for white men to arrive and then attend any of the missionary churches at the time (Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches) (Breidenbach 1962, p.44). In view of this instruction, many converts were won for the Roman Catholic and the Methodist Churches found in the area. The Methodists and the Catholics were not the only people on the scene, the Seventh Day Adventists also tried to make use of the movement by starting work at Asanta (Debrunner 1967, p.272).

The Twelve Apostles' Church has been said to be the first African Independent Church (AIC) formed in Ghana and the name was derived from the practice that Prophet Harris appointed “Twelve Apostles” or leaders in the village



to look after the needs of the “flock” (Baeta 1962, p.9). Some of the converts of Prophet Harris discovered that the Old Testament and the New Testament narratives give prominence to healing which was an immense relevance to the Africans. In view of all the above mentioned factors, these converts decided to form their church which will focus on healing which has been overlooked by the missionaries in their kerygma (preaching) and so formed the Twelve Apostles’ Church (Gray 1990, p.102). The Twelve Apostles’ Church was founded by John Nackabah, a former traditional priest from Essuawua near Enchi and Grace Tane, a traditional priestess specifically responsible for treating pregnant women in Krisan near Eikwe, who were both converted and baptized into Christianity by Prophet Harris (Breidenbach 1962, p.47). Grace Tane abandoned the work or ministry entrusted to her by Prophet Harris after he left due to the tension created when she wanted to go with the prophet. Grace Tane then took to selling palm wine for her livelihood. After she did this for some time she fell ill mysteriously. Grace Tane was then taken to John Nackabah who healed her and told her that the sickness was as a result of her abandoning the work of God entrusted to her. This convinced Grace Tane to team up with John Nackabah to work in the ministry left to them until the death of John Nackabah in 1947.

There may be some remote causes as well as immediate causes that might have contributed or led to the formation of independent faith healing church like the Twelve Apostles’ Church. During the time of the ministry of Prophet Harris, there was a social disorientation against him and other African prophets who emerged at the time. Colonial suppression or the standard of “orthodox” theology

was utilized in the foreign missionary enterprise to the detriment of the proliferation of the African missionary movements (Breidenbach 1962, p.5).

Grace Tane and John Nackabah embarked on the healing ministry entrusted to them in the manner of Prophet Harris. Initially Grace Tane and John Nackabah heeded the instruction of the prophet which allowed the converts to attend the missionary churches and so most of the followers of Grace Tane and John Nackabah had to travel far distances to find missionary churches to attend (Breidenbach 1962, p.50). They did this for sometime but later felt that they could no longer bear the cost involved in traveling to church

Some of the immediate causes which accounts for the formation of the Twelve Apostles' Church include the following: firstly, the followers of Grace Tane and John Nackabah attended the missionary churches for sometime, but the mission trained catechists started being sceptical about their conversion and started asking them questions about their faith in God. The missionary churches did not even accept the people who had been baptized by John Nackabah (Breidenbach 1962, p.50).

Secondly, Grace Tane remarked that “when the Methodist or Roman Catholic Church see that you are possessed by a spirit they don't like it” (Breidenbach 1962, p.60), signifying that those churches did not want to deal with anyone or anything pertaining to spiritual things. In this case even when one was being harassed by evil spirits, one could not have a solution and so many people

looked for places where they could have a sense of security against witchcraft and other evil spirits (Breidenbach 1962, p.60).

Thirdly, another follower of Grace Tane also explained why John Nackabah and his followers had to form their own church. He said,

Why the Nackabah people separated themselves from the Roman's (author's error) Church came because of the calabash. They went to the Roman's, but the Romans said that they played the calabash, and if this is so they said they don't want them to come. That is why they too went and formed their own Church (Breidenbach1962, p.60).

Concerning the use of the calabash or rattles instruments to be used during worship by the people of John Nackabah, Rev. J.Mckeown was sent by the Apostolic Church to inspect their work at Kadjabir in order to approve it for a financial support. When Rev. Mckeown saw them using the rattles, he asked them to put that away and replace it with tambourines. Since the people believed that the rattles or the calabash had power to drive away evil spirits, they were not prepared to exchange it with tambourines which were regarded as noise making toys. They initially pleaded with Reverend Mckeown to allow them to use the rattles but since that plea was not heeded to, the followers of Grace Tane and John Nackabah decided to go their separate ways (Baeta 1962, p.16). Grace Tane and John Nackabah having realized that the missionary churches did not want them,

but had a ministry to accomplish all the same, teamed up to form the Twelve Apostles' Church (Breidenbach 1962, p.16).

### **Characteristics of the Twelve Apostles' Church**

The Twelve Apostles' Church is an example of the African Independent Churches (AIC) and as such it possesses some general characteristics of the AIC in terms of its doctrines or theology and practices and some of them are going to be discussed below.

**Pneumatological emphasis:** This is the emphasis laid on the work of the Holy Spirit. As an AIC, the Church views its emergence to be as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the churches which is credited with rediscovering the role of the Holy Spirit and making the role of the Spirit the main focus and preoccupation of faith and practice. The Twelve Apostles' Church therefore believes in the gifts of the Spirit that manifest in diverse ways including healing, speaking in tongues, prophesying and so on which form the basis of their faith and practice (Mwaura 2003, p.7).

**The spiritual call of a prophet:** The calling of a prophet in the Twelve Apostles' Church is characterized by compelling visions, repeated dreams and sometimes illness that finally lead to the total surrender of the prophet to the call of Christ (Mwaura 2003, p.7). This was seen in the case of Grace Tane who fell ill mysteriously as a result of her abandoning the ministry (Breidenbach 1962, p.50)

**Church as a community:** The Twelve Apostles' Church and all AICs have the concept of the church as an assembly of believers just as in the early church.

The church as a physical structure is alien to the Twelve Apostles' Church and so can worship freely at any place such as homes, or open air places. There is *Koinonia* or fellowship expressed in terms of sharing, among members of the same faith, personal properties and concerns regardless of social status. The homes of the leaders are "havens of belonging" where they are open to those in need (Mwaura 2003, p.10).

Flexible liturgy: The liturgy of the Twelve Apostles' Church is characterized by spontaneity. There is great participation from all the worshipers and a lot of flexibility. There is much room created in their liturgy for the outworking of the Holy Spirit.

Prominent role of women: There are a large proportion of women, who take part in the religious and social life of this Church. In this Church, women have been founders of branch churches, principal leaders and often wield immense power. This Church confers status and prominence on women and often builds some of them into formidable prophetesses (Mwaura 2003, p.12).

The characteristics mentioned above are generally identified with all or most of the AICs. The Twelve Apostles' Church is also noted with the use of certain sacred items like water, rattles on the gourd as an instrument, Moses' staff (this will be explained later in the work), and incense and so on in the course of their practices. These practices were obtained from direct observations by the researcher at various "Gardens" of the Church in the Jomoro and Ellembele Traditional Areas.

The use of water for healing: The emphasis of the Church on healing has been the very reason for its existence. Even though, healing is a general concern for humanity, this Church has given it a great prominence. These prophet-healers wield great insight and act as intermediaries between God and humankind. They are counselors, psychotherapists, exorcists, ritualists and priests. Prayer is central to healing but in the course of ministering healing to the patients, water is used as a medium for healing which is done in the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Water is believed by the Twelve Apostles Church to have a medicinal property and has the ability to cure diseases. Water is the most important thing used in healing or curing the patients that come to the “Garden”. It is used in bathing, cleansing or purifying them. It is also fetched in a basin for every patient to carry and prayed over whiles the rest of the congregation sing and play the gong-gong. After sometime the evil spirit that is believed to be responsible for the sickness of the patient begins to manifest itself in the basin of water by shaking it uncontrollably on the head of the patient.

When the prophet or prophetess or *Osofo* (the term *Osofo* is the Akan name for prophet and prophetess or priest and priestess and the plural is *Asofo*. These terms may be used interchangeably when the need arises) prays over the water for one to drink, it gives healing, according to Prophetess Christba (personal communication, March 13, 2009). Water is also used in preparing herbal medicine or concoction that some patients will drink. A herbal concoction is made and poured into the nostrils of dying patients to resuscitate them while some herbs are also given to mental patients to heal them.

From Breidenbach's (1973) research, the members of the Twelve Apostles' Church believe that water has a divine origin which means that it comes from God and it contains a life giving force capable of providing or maintaining purity in an individual. It is also said that as a woman gives birth to a child, so it is that a god gives birth to water. This means that water is very important that when it is used to either bath the patient or to drink purifies him or her and restores back his or her health (p. 229)

The use of rattles on the gourd as a musical instrument: It is the main musical instrument used by the Twelve Apostles' Church. This was the instrument that Prophet Harris was using when he was preaching the gospel. It was an African musical instrument he discovered. The congregation of the Twelve Apostles' Church shakes it when singing. This is done very passionately and energetically since it is believed to invoke good spirits and thereby causing evil spirits dwelling in people to manifest themselves for the evil spirits to be exorcised. The music produces ecstasy which leads to spirit possession that enables the *Osofo* to prophesy. In view of this, music features prominently during healing and exorcism service which usually takes place during Friday worships.

The use of "Moses staff": It is designed in the form of a cross that rests on a two meter long stick. The *Asofo* use Moses' staff due to the fact that Moses used a staff to perform miracles such as Moses pointing the staff to the Red Sea for it to divide in Exodus 14:6. Prophet Harris used to hold it when preaching. This is believed to be a symbol of authority of the *Osofo*. This is comparable to the use of the staff by the linguist who is the official spokesperson of the chief or the king

among the traditional Akans. This means that as an *Osofo* holds the staff, he or she acts as an official spokesperson of God and serves as his or her symbol of authority (Breidenbach 1973, p.273). It is stretched on the patients whilst praying for them in the healing or curing process. During exorcism or driving away of evil spirits, this is either stretched on the patient or used in touching the forehead of the patient. When the trainees or devotees are working for the *Osofo*, they use it as an authority given by the *Osofo* to discharge that duty.

The use of water cisterns: These are wells of water located usually at the center of the compound of the “Garden” beside the big cross in the “Garden”. A short wall is usually built around them. These cisterns of water are referred to by the people of the Twelve Apostles’ Church as “david” and “holy spirit”. The “david” and the “holy spirit” can be fetched for patients to be sent home for protection, driving away evil spirits from their rooms, preventing or casting out witches and wizards, to heal diseases and many other purposes. They are covered mostly with white cloth. When a mad person is brought into the “Garden” some of either “the david” or “holy spirit” can be used in washing the face of patients to enable him or her regain his or her sanity. Though the water from the “david” is called holy water according to Isaiah 12:3 and Ezekiel 36:25, the name “david” comes from the fact that David took smooth stones from the brook (1Sam 17:40) and if one of such stones could kill Goliath then water from the brook is believed to be powerful in healing and capable of doing many things. People with problems in life come to bow before them to pray for direction. Some of them make pledges so that when answers are received, they come to redeem their



pledges. These are shown in plate 8 and the “david” and the holy Spirit are labeled D and B respectively at page 142.

The use of the lightning stone: According to *Osofo* Christba (personal communication March 13, 2009), a prophetess of Galilee Garden in Bonyere, lightning struck her compound or “Garden” five years after she was ordained as a *Osofo* in 1965. This does not happen to every *Osofo* but a few privileged ones. *Osofo* Christba was one of the blessed ones to have had this experience in her ministry. When the lightning struck the compound of *Osofo* Christba, it landed on the compound in the form of a sharpened stone with sparks of fire from the sky and whichever part of the compound it struck or landed, a lamb was burnt as a sacrifice. The ashes of the burnt offering is also used for healing or curing sick people especially mad people, that are brought into the “Garden”. The stone is full of calcium. Pieces of it can be ground and dissolved in rain water and put in the nose of a dying patient to sneeze in order to resuscitate him or her to regain consciousness.

The use of red thread: Red and white strips of clothes are made into threads and tied round the waist, the legs, the hands, the wrists and even made into a necklace for patients. The thread is mostly put in some amount of “david” and some amount of “florida water” added and the *Osofo* prays over it. It is believed it can drive away evil spirits from a patient. It can detect and arrest witches and wizards. It is used for protection against any evil spirit (Ergoteh Nda, personal communication, March 13, 2009).

The use of incense: This is a slender aromatic stick like the thickness of a broom stick and about hundred centimeters long. Different kinds of them are used. Most of them are manufactured in India. For example some of them are known as “9 9”, “Mummy water”, “Seven seas”, “Black beauty”, “Desire”, “Srisalbaba” etc. The type to be used is determined by the Holy Spirit on every occasion. It is used during worship on Sunday and morning devotions. It is believed to drive away all evil spirits and brings down angels (Bonyah Avoh, personal communication, March 13, 2009).

The use of candle: There are different colours of the candle that are used. Some of them are white, red, yellow and black. The most commonly used one is the white and in some cases the red type. Apart from the white type, if there is any other that needs to be used, it is determined by the *Osofo* depending on the occasion. It is used for worship or devotional purpose in the temple and it signifies the light of God driving away every darkness in people’s lives. It symbolizes purity and drives away evil spirits that may interrupt with the services. Its use is motivated by the Old Testament practice of the Israelites. In Exodus 25:31-40 God commanded the Israelites to make lamp stand so that candles can be fixed on them (James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009).

The use of the cross: At the compound of most “Gardens” of the Twelve Apostles’ Church is a big wooden cross. This is erected almost at the middle of the compound beside the “david” with a wall around it. It is a symbol of Christ crucified. It is erected at the compound due to the fact that in Numbers 21:4-9 God asked Moses to erect a bronze snake that if anyone who was bitten by a

snake should look, the person would be healed. In this case the cross is also erected on the compound so that if any one gets into trouble or afflicted with any disease (bitten by the snake of affliction) kneels down to look gets healed. People come to kneel down in front of it to pray. Patients are prayed for while kneeling before the cross. They show their humility before Christ showing their regret for any sin committed by bowing down before it and rubbing their mouths at the base of the cross. This is a kind of penance done by members for sins committed. Prayers made there are believed to be effective and able to heal the sick (James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009). This is illustrated by plate 8 and it is labeled A at page 142.

The use of white cloth: It is used mostly on Sundays to cover the table in the temple and also in covering “the david”. This is a symbol of purity and reverence to God. During prayers and devotional periods, it symbolizes the sanctity that attracts angels into the assembly (Ergoteh Awoyeh, personal communication, March 13, 2009).

The use of the red cloth: This is used on Fridays to hang on the cross to signify the death of Jesus Christ. Due to this, the members of the Church wear red garment to conform to that occasion. It is some of this red cloth that is used for the red thread.

### **The liturgy of the Twelve Apostles’ Church**

The order of service of the Twelve Apostle Church was obtained from both a participant observation by the researcher and from the interactions with

members of the Church after their services. The Twelve Apostle Church meets on Fridays and Sundays for their main services. In addition to that, morning devotions are conducted on most of the days of the week with the exception of Saturdays, from 5:30 am to about 6:00 am. Morning devotions start with an opening prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer and then someone raises an *abibindwom* which is the "African lyrics". In some cases, several congregational prayers are made where certain topics are given by the *Osofo* for every one in the congregation to pray over. Most of these topics concentrate more on praying for the sick and for people with other problems. In other cases, each member prays one after the other and this prayer is interrupted with the Lord's Prayer after the fourth person has prayed. After these prayers, everyone gives a scripture quotation and after each quotation the leader says "may the Lord bless that for us forever" while the congregation responds "Amen". Somebody then gives a word of exhortation and after that the *Osofo* says the benediction. The *Osofo* will also sprinkle some of the water from "the david" on the members, bringing the devotion to an end.

Most of the Friday worship services are conducted between the hours of 12:00 noon to about 4:00 pm. It is mostly devoted to healing and the services are conducted in two sessions. The first session is normally held in their temple and then followed immediately by the second one which is held on the compound purposely devoted for healing and deliverance. During the first session an opening prayer is said by one of the devotees who enters the temple while the rest of the members play the rattles on the gourd and the gong-gong. In front of the

congregation, there is a table with red cloth on it, with a candle and incense lit, a white stool, a pillow beside and a sheep skin (shown in plate 7 in front of Prophetess Christba in Galilee Garden, Bonyere at page 141) in front of the table. Any member who enters the temple has to kneel down with the head on the ground to say a word of prayer before joining the rest of the congregation to sing. While members enter the temple one by one to pray and to join the rest of the congregation for the worship, the *Osofo* kneels down before the cross at the compound praying for healing of the sick for some time. When he or she finishes praying, he or she enters the temple and prays for the congregation. The *Osofo* also prays over the water mixed with perfume and “florida water” and then sprinkles it over the members to bless them. Before concluding the first session and initiating the second session, the *Osofo* finds out from the members if anyone had visions and dreams the previous night. When the dreams are shared by those members, the *Osofo* would pray over them. It is believed that angels would be revealing some directions to people’s deliverances through dreams so that they will guide the *Osofo* and the devotees during the healing session.

During the second session of the service, the patients partially undress. In other words the men wear only shorts while the women would have a piece of cloth up to the chest. They all line up on the compound carrying small basins of water. The devotees or trainees stand one after the other before the “david” praying with the staff and a rosary. After that each devotee prays for a patient and in the course of the prayer dips his or her hand in the water carried by the patient and afterwards uses it in bathing the patient. The *Osofo* does the same and prays

finally for them. All these are done amidst music through out the session. When the spirit responsible for any sickness manifests itself in shaking the water, the *Osofo* comes and stands before the cross to divine. This is done through the use of the holy cup raised to the sky and looking up into the sky whiles praying. It is believed that during the divination, every secret is revealed for the people to know what to do to set the patient free. The patients are then thoroughly bathed with soap and water from the “david”, “florida water” and perfume.

When all these activities are completed for the patients, all the *asofo* together with their members move round the “david” and the cross with singing and dancing. Such movement is referred to by the people as journey round the cross and “the david”. After this journey, they all say the Lord’s Prayer and the *Osofo* gives the benediction.

On Sundays at 9.00 am, the first bell will go to remind the people of the morning service and then at 9.30 am, the second bell goes for the commencement of the service. The service starts with one of the devotees saying the opening prayer after which they sing some hymns. They use the Methodist hymnal in Fante. The first reading will be taken, followed by an “*abibindwom*” interlude. The second and third readings will be taken with either hymnal interlude or “*abibindwom*”. The choir sings a song or two before the preacher comes to give the message.

The Methodist Liturgy is used for their Sunday service and there is a local preacher trained with the local preachers’ manual of the Methodist Church to do

this on Sundays. This is believed to be due to the fact that the founders came from the Methodist Church so some of the items or activities on the liturgy of the Twelve Apostles' Church were taken from the Methodist Church. The preaching is mostly interspersed with *abibindwom* until the end of the service after which the offertory is received followed by the announcement and then closed with a prayer.

### **The doctrines of the Twelve Apostles' Church**

Most of the beliefs and doctrines of the Twelve Apostles' Church may be based on the Old Testament practices and some of them are going to be discussed here with the texts or passages quoted from the Revised Standard Version. Most of the details of the doctrines were given by James Blay of Prophet Mieza Bonya's Garden, Mbem, (James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009). Most of the songs they sing portray their doctrines or what they believe in and this confirms their belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his crucifixion. The type of songs also proves their belief in the virgin birth of Christ. They also believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit especially the gifts of tongues and the interpretation of tongues as it was demonstrated on the Pentecost day.

They believe and pray through the name of Jesus Christ and also believe in the power of prayer and fasting. During the period of fasting and prayer, they go to pray at a quiet place, more especially praying at midnight at the cemetery just as some people also go to pray at the mountain sites. They explain that the

cemetery is always quiet and so it is conducive for prayers (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009).

Their practice of divination is based on the Old Testament practice where people went to prophets or seers to seek the counsel of God or inquire about the mind of God concerning the future. 1 Samuel 9:6 says “but he said to him, ‘Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man that is held in honour; all that he says comes true. Let us go there; perhaps he can tell us about the journey on which we have set out’”. These people went to see Samuel about King Saul’s father’s donkeys that were lost (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009).

Most prophets used some sacred items in the Old Testament days for divination. For example, the *urim* and *thummim*. In view of this, the Twelve Apostles’ Church believes in the use of a sacred item to divine or inquire of the Lord. Unlike the Old Testament prophets’ use of *urim* and *thummim*, the Church uses a cup referred as the holy cup for divination. The use of this cup is supported by Psalm 116:13 which says, “I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord”.

Based on Genesis 44:4,5, which has been quoted earlier on, the people believe that divination is biblical and so the holy cup is also ordained by God to be used (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009).

They worship on Fridays and Sundays due to the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday. On Fridays they wear red attire



signifying the day of the crucifixion of Christ. Mark 15:20 says “and when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him...” This tells that the people covered the nakedness of Jesus with a purple clothes and that is what members of the Twelve Apostles wear to share in his suffering. Isaiah 63: 1 also says that “who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garment from Bozrah, he that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength”. This also tells that the red attire worn on Fridays also signifies victory. On Sundays they wear white to show the resurrection day of Jesus (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009).

The use of the rattle on the gourd: This is motivated by the fact that in Exodus 15:20 after the Egyptians got drowned in the Red Sea Miriam the prophetess went out with the women with ‘timbrel’ in her hands playing and dancing. In this case the word *Mfuaba* in the Fante Bible which is the Fante word for timbrel in that scripture is interpreted by the Twelve Apostles’ Church as the calabash or rattles on the gourd which is used by the Twelve Apostles’ Church (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009). This is illustrated in plate 7 and it is labeled A at page 140.

The concept of healing with water, according to the doctrines of the Twelve Apostles’ Church, is motivated by John 9:6,7 which says, “ As he said this, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, saying to him ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam...’” and in the story of the healing of Naaman in II Kings 5, he was asked to go and wash in River Jordan for his healing. This shows that when a prophet blesses water for a

patient it is able to solve so many problems for the patient (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009).

The “david” is a well containing water that is used for healing purposes. In John 5 there was the Bethesda pool where angels come to stir, for sick persons to get healed so they believe in the ministration of angels to the sick people and they believe at night angels come to stir that well and when any one uses it in any way he or she has solutions to his or her problems. Though the water is called holy water according to Isaiah 12:3 and Ezekiel 36:25, the name “david” comes from the fact that David took smooth stones from the brook (1Sam 17:40) and if one of such stones could kill Goliath then water from the brook is believed to be powerful to heal, capable of doing many things. The name “david” is also from the fact that it is associated with David’s power as a warrior and it is believed that the water is capable of defeating any enemy that will come into contact with it (David Arthur, personal communication March 13, 2009). David is shown in plate 8 and it is labeled D at page 142.

The *Asofo* use of “Moses’ staff” is from the fact that Moses used a staff to perform miracles even like the division of the Red Sea in Exodus 14:6. Elisha sent Gehazi, his servant, with his staff in II Kings 4:29 to put it on the face of the dying son of the Shunamite woman. In Mark 6:8 Jesus charged his disciples to “Take nothing for their journey except a staff...” (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009). Moses’ staff is illustrated in plate 5 labeled B at page 107.

Big crosses are erected in the “Gardens” of the Twelve Apostles’ Church premises to signify Christ. I Cor. 1:18 says “for the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”. So according to the belief of the Twelve Apostles’ Church, the cross is there as the power of God to save people in the “Garden”. It is erected in the compound due to the fact that in Numbers 21:4-9 God asked Moses to erect a bronze snake that if anyone who was bitten by a snake looked he or she would be healed. In the case of this Church, the cross is also erected on the compound so if any one who is bitten by the snake of affliction kneels to look at it he or she would get healed. In the story of Jacob in Genesis 28:10-22 he had a dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder, when he was running away from his father’s house, he anointed the stone and said “Surely the Lord is in this place...” Thus when Grace Tane had the power to heal and helped people, she erected a cross as a symbol showing that, that place was the house of God where people could come for solution to their problems (James Blay, personal communication March 13, 2009). A typical Garden of the Twelve Apostles’ Church showing the cross is found in plate 8 and it is labeled A at 142.

In Mark 5:1-13, Jesus met the man possessed with the legion of evil spirits. The evil spirits saw him and asked not to be sent out into the empty area but to enter in the pigs and Jesus agreed to do that. In this scenario, from the Twelve Apostles’ Church’s perspective, it looks like there was a negotiation and a compromise between Jesus and the spirit. During exorcism or deliverance sessions of the Twelve Apostles’ Church, the *Osofo* negotiates with the spirit for

anything to be done to set the patient free and what to offer. The Church believes that sacrifices of different kinds can be made to set the patient free. The Church holds that when those sacrifices are offered or the demands of the spirit oppressing the victim or the patient are made, the spirit will leave the host. The Church uses the understanding above to explain why sometimes sacrifices are offered on behalf of some patients to other gods or spirits or items are collected to appease or pacify them. These gods may be responsible for the patients' plight due to certain offences the patients might have committed against them. From James Blay's (personal communication March 13, 2009) account, the animal to be used is determined by those gods or the spirits offended by the patients.

According to the teaching of the Twelve Apostles' Church, (personal communication with Nda, and Elizabeth Abizi, March 13, 2009) the life of an animal like a sheep or a goat can be substituted for that of a dying patient to save his or her life. This is motivated by story in Gen 22 where God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac and later God had to provide a ram. In this story, it is believed God substituted Isaac's life with a ram and so if someone is dying, a ram or a goat can be used as a substitute for his or her life.

During such a ritual, articles like a bottle of wine, a packet of candle and incense, are collected together with a sheep. The candles according to the Church are used to drive away the darkness surrounding the patient, the incense used to attract the presence of angels to minister to the patient and the aroma of the wine also seeks to attract the angels who are to minister to the patients. The *Osofo* will wash the live sheep symbolizing purification and pray over all the articles in order

to consecrate the sheep. He or she holds the sheep and takes it round the patient three times after which the patient carries the sheep on his or her neck. The sheep is then brought down slowly from the neck of the patient. This is to identify the sacrificial animal or the sheep with the one offering the sacrifice. This ritual will be repeated for seven days and every time it is completed the sheep will be tied in a rope. This is because the number seven is believed to be complete and as such the ritual must be complete to get the desired results. When it is completed on the seventh day the sheep will be released. According to Prophet Nda (personal communication March 13, 2009), this ritual was performed for his mother and immediately when the sheep was released the sheep just entered her room and died. According to the story, the life of the sheep was substituted for that of the mother to save her life.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ENROLMENT INTO THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE TWELVE**

#### **APOSTLES' CHURCH**

##### **Introduction**

According to the members of the Twelve Apostles' Church, a devotee is someone who has accepted the challenge to go for training from an *Osofo*. Such a devotee or person goes to stay with the *Osofo* for an “on the job” apprenticeship training for a period which will be determined by the *Osofo*. When the training is completed, an ordination or graduation ceremony will be organized where such a person is officially and publicly inducted into the office of a prophet or prophetess.

##### **The initiation**

In the Twelve Apostles' Church, it is not every one who attends the Church that is referred to as a devotee but only those believed to be chosen by the spirit of God. Those who are chosen by the spirit are initiated to be recognized as devotees or trainees. The person can be a male or female. When one is chosen, one experiences some form of sickness, becomes restless, experiences sleepless nights and sometimes nightmares that makes one shouts in the nights. Some of

the experiences from some of the *Asofo* have it that the one “called”, sometimes experiences shaking all over the body and even speaks strange languages. Some of these “called” members who were engaged in trade had their commercial activities collapsed through losses or have the goods getting burnt. If one refuses to heed to this call, strange sicknesses may befall such a person. If some of these signs are experienced and the individual goes to see any *Osofo* of the Twelve Apostles’ Church, such a person would be told that he or she has been chosen by the spirit to be trained. The head of every branch of the church in the “Garden” is the *Osofo*, assisted by the devotees followed by the regular members and then the patients who visit the “Gardens” for their problems to be solved. It is some of these visitors who become member. All these signs can be likened to what Geoffrey Parrinder (1976) said about someone who is called to be a diviner “a man may suffer from fits or sickness, and deduce from this that a spirit is seeking to speak through him” (p.103). Prophetess Sarah Ackah (personal communication, March 21, 2009) also explained that when such a person decides to stay with the *Osofo* to be trained, that affliction leaves the person. When such a person is completely healed, his or her calling is confirmed through divination by the cup and then his or her initiation follows.

During the initiation, the devotee will be prayed for by a group of *Asofo* forming a priesthood board, and then cleansed or bathed with water containing “florida water”. This is done on a Friday. The devotee will be clothed with a red garment and one member of the priesthood board will take the holy cup containing water, raises it up and looks up into the sky to divine to know whether

the devotee is called to be initiated and other issues concerning the devotee (Manza Eyeduah, personal communication March 10, 2009).

The devotee will also be given the holy cup to discern whether he or she has been chosen to be trained into the priesthood. If God has accepted him or her, it will be shown when the new devotee raises the cup into the sky, and a power or a force holds the cup in the air and then the cup is weighed down. This divination is repeated three times. When this is proved to be successful, the priesthood board sprinkles powder on the devotee signifying that the devotee has successfully been accepted to go through the priesthood initiation process. Here, one of the priests collects the cup from the devotee and places it under the cross. From that day on, the actual training of the devotee begins (Manza Eyeduah, personal communication, March 10, 2009).

Some devotees are called into priesthood in their own rights and so they bear their own names after training while others who are chosen to succeed either of his or her parents or a closed relative who was an *Osofo*. The newly ordained *Osofo* who succeeds a deceased *Osofo* is named after the predecessor (John Nackabah IV, personal communication, March 24, 2009). That is if the predecessor is the first then the successor becomes the second. That is why the head prophet of the Twelve Apostles' Church is John Nackabah IV since he succeeded his uncle who was John Nackabah III. In this case, a female devotee can succeed a male prophet and vice versa. This might be made known during the divination process. This name is used during the training and made known to the



public during the ordination. The choice of a successor is done by the spirit and does not lie in the powers of the Church.

Before he or she is initiated into priesthood, the chosen person has to provide some articles like a packet of white candles, a packet of incense, a bottle of a perfume of any kind, florida water, a tin of powder, three -yard piece of any kind of cloth, three -yard piece of red cloth, a bottle of mild alcoholic drink (Aperatif) and some amount of money that will be determined by the *Osofo* (Manza Eyeduah, personal communication, March 10, 2009).

### **Training**

Manza Eyeduah, Krisan, (personal communication, March 10, 2009) intimated that the training sessions are informal apprenticeship type where the initiated devotee learns on the job. Most of these *Asofo* do not have a formal education and so cannot even read the Bible. This makes the training of a devotee more informal. In this case, the devotee goes to stay with the trainer as an assistant who will be in close association with the trainer. The role of a devotee whiles under training is to join or help in organizing morning devotions, pray for the sick patients on admission in the “Garden” and also to lead in the singing. Kangakyi of Tikobo no 2 (personal communication, March 14, 2009) also added that every devotee is also supposed to fast for a particular patient when that patient’s condition is critical and desperate until there is total healing. The devotee bathes the patients on Fridays during healing services. Such spiritual baths in the “Garden” do not only take place on Fridays but as many times as the spirit

will direct the devotees. At some points, the devotee will be required to bath the patient at midnights since it is believed that angels visit the “Garden” to minister to the sick and as such the *Osofo* would like the devotees to take advantage of their presence. In this case, as the devotees administer the spiritual bath to the patients, the angels would also be ministering healing to the patients. If the *Osofo* is to go for any herbal medicine he or she goes with all the trainees or the devotees for them to learn so that they can go for those herbs when the need arises.

In some cases when there is the need for the *Osofo* to offer sacrifices on behalf of any patient, to any spirits that has been offended, it is the duty of the devotee to organize the sacrificial items prescribed by the spirit, that will be brought by the patient’s relatives, examine the quality and the quantity of them, make them ready to go with the *Osofo* and relatives to the spot where the ritual will be performed. The devotees are seen always working with the *Osofo* (the head) of the “Garden” and even handle cases under the supervision of the *Osofo* (Saviour Ngoah, personal communication, March 25, 2009).

*Osofo* Christba of Galilee Garden, Bonyere (personal communication, March 13, 2009) commented that when she was under training, she was the one who was supposed to resuscitate any patient who was brought unconscious and also to divine to know whether the patient would survive or not. If it was known that the patient would not survive he or she was sent away. In this case the devotees might be playing the role of dealing with all the preparatory stages of the patients’ cases for the *Osofo* to deal with.

*Osofo* Christba (personal communication, March 13, 2009) also commented that the prophetesses of the Twelve Apostles' Church have been acting as Traditional Birth Attendants who take care of pregnant women to deliver their babies. When the women are brought to the "Garden" they are given herbal medicines to drink and to have an enema to keep the foetus and the expectant mother healthy until delivery. During training, the devotee is to accompany the *Osofo* to pick those herbs and to take pregnant women through spiritual baths which will protect the pregnant women from all attacks and to ensure safe delivery. The prophetess' work as Traditional Birth Attendants can also be traced to Grace Tane who was taking care of pregnant women, mentioned earlier in this study. She handed down the tradition for women devotees to be trained to be qualified Traditional Birth Attendants by the time they graduate (Christba, personal communication, March 13, 2009).

### **Graduation or ordination ceremony**

For any of the devotees to be outdoored or ordained into the priesthood vocation, it has to be determined by an angel or the spirit revealing it to the *Osofo* and oil is poured on the head of that particular person or devotee. When this is revealed to *Osofo*, the trainer, it is then communicated to the priesthood board who will be called to decide on when to commission or induct the devotee into priesthood or to the office of a prophet or prophetess so that the devotee gets prepared for that occasion. According to the decision of the priesthood board, several devotees can also be brought together for a mass ordination. The researcher had the opportunity of witnessing one of such mass ordination service

on the 15th of March 2009 at Anwea near Nkroful in the Ellembele District where the Head Prophet John Nackabah IV inducted them into office.

Graduation or ordination is a time when any of the devotees passing out of training is specially commissioned or inducted into priesthood either to continue the work of a deceased *Osofo* or set up another station of the Twelve Apostles' Church. During this time, an elaborate ceremony in the form of a coronation will be conducted for the one. When the vision for ordination is seen by the trainer, the time for the ceremony will be fixed starting from a Thursday evening through to Sunday. The devotee to be ordained provides a tin of powder which will be poured on the devotee after he or she has successfully been ordained and the success is being celebrated with other members of the Church; a bottle of perfume, which will be used to administer a spiritual bath for the devotee graduand; red and white clothes which will be worn by the newly ordained *Osofo* on Friday and Sunday services respectively after the ordination; goats or a cow or sheep, a bag of rice, and ingredients like pepper, onions, garden eggs, tomatoes and so on which will be used to prepare meals for members and the public to enjoy themselves after the ceremony (Elizabeth Abizi, personal communication, March 14, 2009).

The devotee will be hidden or quarantined in a room for seven days, fasting and praying together with the *Osofo*, the trainer and other devotees that are yet to complete their training. The ceremony starts on a Thursday evening with a prayer session and this is repeated on Friday morning. On Friday, before the ordination on Sunday, the graduand will be given the holy cup to divine in order

to confirm or otherwise his or her successful training (Elizabeth Abizi, personal communication, March 14, 2009).

During this time of divination for confirmation, the devotee to be ordained raises the cup into the sky, and a power or a force holds the cup in the air and then the cup is weighed down. All the members of the clergy will be present to observe this. This is done three times and when the graduand is successful, any *Osofo* will be appointed to prophesy over the graduand. In the evening, the priesthood board tests the graduating devotee on some scripture verses, the history of the Church, the mission of Prophet William Wade Harris and issues concerning the Church after which the graduand will also be tested in songs in Arabic, Kru, and Abibidwom (traditional songs). When he or she passes the test, prayers continue the next day (Sarah Ackah, personal communication, March 21, 2009).

The graduation or ordination ceremony usually takes place on Sundays. The ordination ceremony is conducted by following the Fante Methodist Liturgy for the outdooring of the local preachers. This is because the founding members of the Church came from the Methodist Church so they were used to the Methodist liturgy and hence use it not only for ordination ceremony but also for Sunday services.

The members of the Twelve Apostles' Church that are gathered start by reciting the Lord's Prayer, followed by confession of sins and after which songs from the Methodist hymnals are sang. This is then followed by the Bible readings in Fante and then in Nzema if the occasion is being done in Nzema area, with the

Methodist hymns especially the Christian Asore Ndwom(CAN) which is the Fante Methodist hymns) interludes. Before the sermon is preached the graduand is given a spiritual bath with water containing florida water, dressed in white robe and veiled in his or her hiding place before he or she is brought out and given a seat in front of the preacher. It is believed that the essence of the ordination is to empower him or her and also to officially declare a graduand an accredited or licensed *Osofo*. The preacher in his sermon encourages the graduand to put his or her trust in God and be committed to prayer since it is through prayer that issues are revealed. After the sermon an appeal for funds is organized to support the ministry of the graduand which will be followed by the actual induction ceremony.

During the induction, the head prophet, an officiating minister, uses the Fante version of the Methodist liturgy. The portion of the Fante Methodist liturgy used in this ceremony reads:

*Otumfo Nyankop]n a akoma nyina bue ma Wo, ahwehw[dze nyina  
inyim, na esumadze biara nnhunta Wo; fa wo Sunsum Kr]nkr]n hyl  
h[n mu tsew h[n akoma mu adwen ho, ma y[nd] wo pirim, na  
yenhuhor wo dzin kr]nkr]n no d[ mbr[ ]s[; w] h[n Ewuradze Jesus  
Christ ntsi. Amen.*

Below is the English version:

Almighty God before whom all hearts are opened to, beyond all searching and all hidden things are exposed, let your Holy Spirit enter

into us and cleanse our hearts and minds. Let us be able to love you at once and exalt your holy name the way we should in the name of Jesus Christ Amen.

The officiating minister leads the graduand to recite the Lord's Prayer in Fante as follows:

*H[n Egya a ew] sor, wo dzin ho ntsew, w'ahendzi mbra w]ny[ wo p[ w] asaase, d[ mbr[ w]y[ no w] sor. ma h[n daa daa edziban nd[. Na fa h[n mfom ky[ h[n, D[ mbr[ y[dze ky[ h]n a w]fom h[n. Na mma nngya h[n nnk] ngyIgye mu; Na yi h[n fi mbusu mu; Na ]wo na ahendzi, nye tum, nye enyimnyam y[ Wodze daa. Amen.*

Below is the English version:

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever Amen.

After the above prayer, the minister declares the purpose of the gathering which is to publicly recognize and commission anyone who has accepted the call of God upon his or her life to proclaim the gospel according to the beliefs of the Church and call the people to witness that:

*Yeedzi ehyia w] Nyame enyim d[ y[regye enuanom nye nkyer[baa yi w] bagua mu ato As[nkafo f[kuw yi mu. Y[gye dzi d[ Nyankop]n na ]afr[ h]n mu na w]agye h]n ato mu d[ mbr[ As]r Twelve Apostles' Church ny[e tse. Y[ser[ d[ Nyankop]n mma h]n d] nye tum ama w]ab] ne ns[mpa no dawur na w]afr[ ]dodow ma w]aba nnuho no dawur mu dze aahy[ n'as]r no ma ama n'enyimnyam na ne dzin kr]nkr]n.*

The English version reads thus:

We have gathered here before God to witness the public recognition of these brethren as part of the association of preachers. We believe that it is God who has called them and has accepted them according to the tradition of the Twelve Apostles' Church. We pray that God will grant them love and power to proclaim the gospel to call people to repentance in order to fulfill the mandate of church growth to the glory of his holy name.

After announcing the purpose of the gathering and openly declaring the Church's acceptance of the graduand, the officiating minister welcomes him or her into the work of proclaiming the word of God and on behalf of the Church declares that this work is what Jesus has left to the Church to do. This is also taken from the Fante liturgy as follows:

*Enuanom nye nkyer[baa ad]fo pa, y[nam h[n Ewuradze Jesus Christ ne dzin mu ma hom akwaaba w] ha nd[ da yi. W]akaa hom*



*edwuma a h[n Ewuradze dze ahy[ n'As]r, nye kwan kor a as] n'enyi  
d[ ]nam do b] ne ns[mpa dawur nye mbr[ n'ahenman b[y[ aba.*

The English version says:

Beloved brethren, we welcome you this day in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. You have been reminded of the work that the Lord commanded the church and the way the gospel of the coming of the kingdom could be preached.

The minister after this administers the oath and in the oath, the minister asks the graduand whether he or she promises to be a true disciple as below:

*Ana egye Jesus Christ to mu d[ w'Agyenkwa nye w'Ewuradze; na  
isua d[ eb[y[ osuanyi nokwafo ama n'As]r Kr]nkr]n no?*

The English version is:

Do you accept Jesus Christ as your saviour and do you promise that you will be a true disciple to his holy Church?

Then the graduand responds *musua d[m* meaning “I promise”. The minister also asks in Fante whether the graduand promises to proclaim the gospel to his or her hearers and he or she promises so as below:

*Ana ew] awer[hy[mu d[ Sumsum Kr]nkr]n na otu wo da ara ampa  
d[ eb] nokwar a w]ada no edzi w] kyer[w kr]nkr]n no mu d[ ]y[  
Nyame n'as[m no dawur, na eda Nkwagye enyimnyam As[mpa a*

*]nam h[n Ewuradze Jesus Christ do no edzi ma h[n a wobetse nyina?*

Below is the English version:

Do you believe that it is the Holy Spirit who has chosen you to proclaim the truth revealed in the Bible as God's word and as such promise to proclaim the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ to all those who will listen?

He or she responds, *Musua d[m* meaning "I promise" . The minister again asks whether the graduand promises to be faithful in conducting church services, the reading of the word and every teaching that will help the growth of the Church and the graduand responds by saying, "I promise",

*Ana eb] anohoba d[ eb[y[ kua w] as]ry[ mu nye Kyer[w Kr]nkr]n ne kenkan mu na esuadze biara a ]boa w] d[m nyimdzee yi mu?*

*Mob] anohoba d[m.* Below is the English version:

Do you promise that you will keep on praying and reading the Bible and to help improve on the knowledge of God in the Church?

And the graduand responds, "I promise". The minister again asks whether the graduand will do his or her best to do the work according to the teachings of the Church and to work hard to better the condition of the Church and the graduand responds, "I promise"

*Ana eb] anohoba d[ ibedzi d[m dwuma yi d[ mbr[ ]nye Twelve  
Apostles' Church As]r nkyer[kyer[ na mbra saa, na aab] mb]dzen  
biara a ibotum etu ne yiey[ mpon?*

*Mob] anohoba d[m.*

Below is the English version:

Do you promise to do this work diligently according to the teaching and the tenets of the Twelve Apostles' Church and to promote the growth of the Church?

“I promise”

The minister now declares on behalf of the Church as having heard and being witnesses to the oath sworn, the graduand has been gladly accepted into the association of priesthood that proclaims the gospel and so declares that “may the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit come upon the graduand always as he or she joins the association”.

*Yeenya atse hom dase pa yi, y[nam h[n Ewuradze Jesus Christ nye  
n'As]r do dze enyigye gye hom to as[nkafo kuw yi mu. Otumfo  
Nyankop]n egya, ]ba, nye Sumsu Kr]nkr]n nhyira no mbra hom do  
daa w] hom nye h[n f[kuwb] w] ns[mpa no mu.*

Below is the English version:

We have all heard of the oath that has been sworn. We gladly accept you or recognize you as preachers in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ and the Church .May the Almighty God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bless you everyday in our association of preachers of the gospel

After taking the oath, the minister shakes hands of the graduand to welcome him or her into the priesthood by reading the following from the Fante liturgy.

*Y[dze f[kuwb] nsa nyimfa kyia hom d[ ]y[ ak]aba as[nkyer[dze a as]r dze ma, na y[gye hom gyinabew de hom y[ as[nkafo w] mu no to mu.*

The English version has it as follows:

We gladly greet you with the right hand of fellowship as a sign to welcome you on behalf of the Church and we recognize your position as preachers.

The veil is then removed and the minister anoints the graduand on behalf of the Church. The officiating minister presents certain items such as a Bible, a cup referred to as the holy cup, Moses' staff and the rattles on the gourd to the graduand. These items are significant in the sense that the Bible is to remind the graduand to be diligent in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus, the holy cup, a symbol of power and the license to inquire of the Lord through divination, a Moses' staff as a symbol of authority and power to destroy the works of the devil and the rattles on the gourd also as a reminder to one's commitment to the Twelve Apostles' Church. The significance of these items is derived from the declaration read to the graduand from the liturgy given below.

*Afei gye Bible kr]nkr]n yi w] h[n nsamu; na nyia ]dze as[m yi mae no mma wo adom, nyansa nye tum na fa b] nokwar no dawur d[ mbr[ Jesus mu nokwar no tse.*

Below is the English version:

Now receive this Holy Bible from us and may the one who gave you this word grant you grace, wisdom and power to proclaim the gospel according to the truth from Jesus.

Having made this declaration, the minister prays for him or her from the liturgy given below:

*Otumfo nye b[kyebo Nyankop]n, Wo nkotoo na ew] tum a edze aky[dze nye adom a nyimpa nam do hy[ wo p[ ma, ma wo nkowaa yi gyedzi, ahotsew, ntseasee na ]d]; na siesie h]n ma som a ]y[ mfaso. Y[ser[ wo, fa wo nhyira tsew h]n sunsum aky[dze na bra af]rb] ho w] mber a ]y[ nwinwin yi mu. Yebisa yi w] Wo ba h[n Ewuradze Jesus Christ Ne Dzin mu. Amen.*

*Nyankop]n, nyansa nye tum nsunyiwa, fa adwen botooy[ na kory[ koma dom w'asomafo yi, d[ w'asem no nsuae mu woenya wo Sunsum Kr]nkr]n ne kan no na ]aagye h]n ak] nokwar nyina mu. Dom h[n yi osian wo ba h[n Agyenkwa Jesus Christ ntsi. Amen.*

*Nyankopon, ]wo a ]nam wo Sunsum Kr]nkr]n do daa ew] nkor]fo a woehya mu w] Jesus Christ dzin mu no finimfin, ma wo nkowaa*

*yi awer[hy[mu d[ enye h]n w] h], ama w'as[m eekenyan ndzeb]ny[fo, aakyekye awer[hofu wer[, dze fahodzi aabr[nd]mmumfo, na eenyin agyedzifo w] Wo gyedzi Kr]nkr]n soronko no mu ama w]dze aahy[ wo dzin enyimyam. Amen.*

*Otumfo Nyankopon, y[ser[ wo ma w'as]r aab] w'as[m dawur w] ano ana ekyirkyir, ekodu wiadze mf[ndzanan. ma w'aho]dzen, nyansa, mb]dzenb] nye ]d]-sunsum mbr[ wo ns[mpa ho as[nkafo nyina do; ama w'ahenman no aaba na honam nyina eehu Nyame no nkwagye no. Iyi na y[ser[ w] wo ba Jesus Christ dzin mu, ] no a oyi wiadze b]n k]. Amen.*

Below is the English version:

Almighty God, you are the only one with the power to grant gifts and the grace that any body can use to fulfill your will. Give these servants of yours faith, righteousness, understanding and love and prepare them for a profitable service. We pray that you bless and cleanse their spiritual gifts for this life of sacrifice in this time when the weather is cold. We ask this in the name of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ Amen.

God, the bearer of wisdom and power, grant your Church, the heart of quietness and love to these missionaries of yours. Through the declaration of your word, receive an illumination from the Holy

Spirit into all truth. Grant us the grace in the name of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ Amen.

God, it is through your Holy Spirit before the people gathered in the name of Jesus Christ should grant your servants the hope that you are with them, so that your word will revive sinners, comfort those who are mourning, to set the captives free and to strengthen the faith of believers in the extraordinary holy faith to glorify your most holy name Amen.

Almighty God, we pray for your Church to be able to proclaim your word far and near up to the ends of the world. Uplift your strength, wisdom, ability and the spirit of love in your people to proclaim the gospel so that your kingdom will come and all people will see the salvation of God. This is what we ask in the name of your son Jesus Christ, who takes away the sin of the world. Amen.

After the induction, the newly ordained *Osofo* and the congregation go on a town procession amidst drumming and dancing while some of the women are left behind to cook. When they return from the procession, they come to enjoy themselves with the meals prepared.

After the induction ceremony, the graduand continues to stay in the “Garden” to work with his or her trainer for sometime while looking for a site to build his or her own “Garden”. When the graduand finds a site, the priesthood board goes to inspect the place, prays over it, and sprinkles some amount of the

holy water or “david” at the place for the graduand to move in (Isaac Yankey, personal communication, March 14, 2009).

After working in the new “Garden” for sometime, a date is set by the priesthood board to erect the cross in the new “Garden”. Before the date is set the new *Osofo* will have to build an area earmarked for the cross in the “Garden”. The cross is placed at the center of either two concentric circles or squares with the cistern of water or “the david” beside the first outer square or circle. This is because it is believed that the cross signifies the presence of the Lord so the area around it is considered holy and must be declared a restricted area. It is also built to conform to the pattern of the Old Testament temple where the cross is located at the holy of holies (David Arthur, personal communication, April 10, 2009). This is shown plate 8 with the dwarf wall labeled E at 142.

When they are satisfied with the construction a date is fixed for the cross to be erected. The cross is erected at midnight, because it is believed that when God instructed Moses to erect the bronze snake in Numbers 21 it was done in the night. Thanksgiving sacrifice in the form of goat or sheep, rice and other food items for the celebration is provided by the newly ordained *Osofo* in the new “Garden” when the day breaks. From that time the graduand is accepted wholly into the priesthood board and the new “Garden” becomes a permanent Twelve Apostles’ Church station where people can attend services and also come for consultation. Plate 1 shows the head Prophet John Nackabah IV inducting the new *Asofo* into office at page 79.





*Plate 1. A picture showing Head Prophet Inducting new Asofo. A is Head Prophet administering the oath of induction and B shows new Asofo being anointed after induction.*

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PASSAGE 1 SAMUEL 9: 1-10:26**

#### **Introduction**

From the previous chapter, the Twelve Apostles' Church has embraced the concept of divination using a lot of scriptural passages to justify the practice which includes the story in I Sam 9:1-10:27. This talks about Saul who was sent, accompanied by his servant, to look for some lost asses. The two people went round looking everywhere without finding the asses and as they were about to give up, his servant advised him to consult Samuel, a man of God who could tell them the whereabouts of the asses. The Twelve Apostles' Church uses this as one of their main basis to practice divination. This particular chapter deals with the historical background and the interpretation of the passage according to the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

#### **Historical account of the passage**

Kish had lost his she-asses and to find, if possible, the straying animals, Saul, the only son of Kish was sent in the company with a servant to search for

them. Saul, which means “the asked for” was not only described as “choice and goodly” in his entire race, but also apparently handsome and taller than anybody in the land.

From his home at Gibeah, Saul and his servant passed in a north-western direction over a spur of Mount Ephraim and they turned their search eastwards to the land of Shalishah (Edersheim 1972, p.38). Having traversed another district in the land of Benjamin found themselves in the district of Zuph, where Samuel’s home was at Ramah. For three days, the two still searching, when it occurred to Saul that their long absence might cause his father more anxiety than the straying of the she-asses. Before returning home, Saul’s servant suggested that since they were just in view of the city where “the seer” lived, they might first consult him as to the “the way” they “should go” in order to find the she-asses (Edersheim 1972, p.38).

Having ascertained that the seer was not only in the city, but that the people had had “a sacrifice” on the high place outside where Samuel had built an altar, in the hope of finding him there. When they had just entered the city itself, and were “in the gate” or wide place inside the city entrance, they met Samuel where the elders used to sit and popular assemblies gathered, they met Samuel coming from an opposite direction on his way to the “Bamah” or sacrificial “height”. To Saul’s enquiry for the “seer’s house”, Samuel replied by making himself known (Edersheim 1972, p.39). At that time that Saul and his servant were looking for Samuel, he was expecting them since the Lord had revealed to Samuel the previous night. Samuel had prepared for his arrival by ordering the

choicest piece of sacrificial meal to be set aside for his guest. As Samuel saw Saul in the gate his voice indicated that this was the future leader of God's people (Edersheim 1972, p.39).

Samuel invited Saul first to the feast and then to his house. Having been invited to his house by Samuel, he promised Saul of telling him all that was in his heart. Saul was undoubtedly aware that Israel had demanded and were about to receive from Samuel a king, but had no idea that he was going to be chosen since he came from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe (Edersheim 1972, p.40).

Apparently the "seer" made no answer to what Saul had said but at the sacrificial feast Samuel pursued the same course towards his guest. After the feast, Saul followed his host to his house and was sent to the flat roof for a personal conversation with him. Samuel conversed with Saul throughout the night and when Samuel was about to leave his guests to go he sent the servant away from the roof top, and decided to deliver the message of God to Saul and then took a vial of oil and anointed Saul. This placed on Saul the institution of royalty on the same footing as that of the sanctuary and the priesthood (Ex. 30:23, Lev. 8:10), as appointed and consecrated by God and for God and intended to be the medium for receiving and transmitting blessing to his people (Edersheim 1972, pp.41, 42).

After Samuel had anointed Saul, he gave Saul a kiss, which was a token of homage together with a message: "Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to

be prince over his inheritance” was pronounced, to appoint Saul as the first king of Israel (Edersheim 1972, p .42).

### **Biblical interpretation of the passage, 1 Samuel 9:1-10:27 (hermeneutics)**

#### **Biblical interpretation by some biblical scholars**

Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe had been reduced to a very small number by the fatal war with Gibeah and there was the need to provide wives for 600 men that were considered to be poor due to their diminished number. Even though the tribe of Benjamin is the smallest and also the most financially poorest, it was high in dignity (Henry 2006, p.397) before the sight of Yahweh. Saul was the son of Kish who was the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Apiah. The genealogy speaks of some measure of respectability. Kish, the father of Saul is described as *gibbor hayil* which means either he belonged to a warrior elite or probably a man of wealth (Gordon 1986, p.112). Kyle McCarter (1980) also says that *gibbor hayil* often has military connotation (Joshua 1:4; 8:3; 10:7) and also describes social standing with high economic power. Since *hayil* means wealth as well as physical strength, it became applicable to any high ranking citizen or a powerful man (McCarter Jr, 1980 p.173).

Saul’s father might be a wealthy military general who had a lot of possessions including asses where some of them were missing and had to send Saul and his servant to go and look for them. It is stated by Stoebe in R.W. Klein’s research (as cited by Klein 1983, p .86) that the asses were the riding animals of nobility and so their loss would mean both poverty and inability to

fulfill leadership role. Since Kish himself might be a military general, he had to take the responsibility of sending people to go and look for them (Klein 1983, p.86). This is seen in the text in 1 Sam 9:5, 6 as follows:

When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who is with him, ‘come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the asses and become anxious about us’. But he said to him, ‘Behold, there is a man of God in this city and he is a man that is held in honour; all that he says comes true. Let us go there; perhaps he can tell us about the journey on which we have set out’

According to Hertzberg (1976), Saul advised that they go back home but it was upon the advice of the servant when they got to the land of Zuph, that they went to the famous man of God living in the neighbourhood who, as the servant is aware, knows everything (p.81). A man of God refers to a priest or a prophet who is having the Spirit of God as his possession and also having in himself something of the divine nature so that he or she can become a medium of divine communication (Lindblom 1973, pp.60, 61).

A man of God is a person who is known to possess divine powers that enable him or her to heal the sick, raise the dead, perform miracles and also has the ability to know unseen things which may be past, present or future (McCarter Jr. 1980, p.176). It is that ability that made Samuel a man sought after by many people. It was due to Samuel’s fame that made the servant to suggest to Saul that they could consult concerning the lost asses. Samuel was recommended to Saul

due to the fact that whatever he said came through. This is Deuteronomistic criterion of a true prophet found in Deut 18:22 (Gordon 1986, p.113).

In 1 Sam 9:7 Saul asked the servant, "... if we go, what can we bring the man"? In the text, Saul was concerned about his ability to provide a local dignitary with an appropriate token of greetings (*tesura*) before requesting for assistance (McCarter Jr. 1980, p.176). The term for the gift used here, *tesura*, occurs only here in 1 Sam 9:1-10:26 in biblical Hebrew. This stands for a gift of greetings. This can be compared to the Akkadian *tamartu*, gift of greetings which fundamentally refers to an occasion of "seeing one another", which, in other words, may be a gift given upon seeing someone especially a king and hence a tribute (McCarter Jr. 1980, p.176). Robert P. Gordon (1986) believes that it was customary to take a present when one went to seek the help of a seer (1 Kings 14:3, 2 Kings 5:5, 15, 8:8). The gift, *tesura*, may be derived from the verb meaning "to see", and is therefore, precisely defined as an "interview fee" (p.113).

From the *Peake's Commentary*, the word "seer" is mentioned in 1 Sam 9:9 for the first time and has attracted much discussion. There are two words used here, seer, (*ro'eh*) and prophet (*nabi*). Seer and prophet are virtually identified generally as the same but differ in the way they function. The use of the word "seer" is outdated in favour of the word "prophet". Though here, they are used as synonyms, the words do suggest different characteristics. *Ro'eh* refers to the visionary element in the prophetic phenomenon where as *nabi*, from the root word

which means “to utter”, seems to refer to the prophetic utterance of God’s word (Brockington 1977, p.322).

It can be deduced that the culture of consulting men of God or prophets concerning the unknown issues existed among the people of Israel. Although it has been stated by H.H. Rowley (as cited by Freeman 1971, pp.18-28) that “it is ... quite impossible to treat Hebrew prophecy as an isolated phenomenon. Even though it is believed to have grown out of a background of Ancient Near Eastern prophecy”, it has its uniqueness (Freeman 1971, pp.18-28). The divine origin of the prophetic institution is set forth in Deut 18:9-22 by Moses himself who never came into contact with the religious institution of Canaan, declared in this passage that there was to be an institution of prophets raised up who would declare the messages of God and that his office would one day culminate in one great prophet like unto himself (Moses). From Moses’ time, the voice of prophecy was rarely heard. The prophetic movement did not really become an organized institution until the time of Samuel when the prophetic movement in the Old Testament was organized into schools of prophets (Freeman 1971, pp.18-28).

According to Harry Mowvley (1979) three views of the origins of the Israelite prophecy have emerged. First, Von Rad suggests (as cited by Mowvley 1979, p 12) that in the light of evidence put forward, Israel first came into contact with prophecy among Canaanite people after the settlement on Canaanite soil and took it over from them, adapting it in the process to her own conception of God. Second, Eichrodt argues (as cited by Mowvley 1979, p 12) that the prophecy was not borrowed from anyone but originated naturally in Israel as it had been



done among other people. It is often associated with abnormal behaviour due to possession by God in which a man ceases temporarily to be himself and becomes ecstatic. Such a state was the outcome of the “sacred dance”. Dancing as a form of religious expression is found in many cultures and the music and rhythmic movements send the participants into this ecstatic state. Furthermore, the fact that the earlier Israelite prophets wore clothes of camel’s hair and ate the fare of the desert seems to suggest that they were strongly opposed to the Canaanite way of life. If this is so they were unlikely to borrow anything from it. Thus it arose spontaneously among Israelite tribes. The third, views a kind of compromise. Lindblom agrees that prophecy arose in Israel spontaneously, just as it did in many cultures where ecstatic behaviour followed from a close relationship between certain individuals and their god. He points out that such a phenomenon as ecstasy can hardly be borrowed since it is a real experience and not just an imitation of someone else’s behaviour. But the forms in which these possessed people expressed themselves as they conveyed their messages from God, and the terms which were applied to them by others were quite probably derived from the Canaanites among whom they settled (pp.9-10). The second and the third views by Eichrodt and Lindblom respectively tend to agree with the uniqueness of the Israelite prophecy expressed by Freedman.

During the period of Samuel, consulting men of God for God’s assistance in matters of secrecy in life had become a normal tradition of the people. This was to inquire the mind of God concerning a secret in life. It was as a result of the duty of inquiry that made Samuel so famous that Saul’s servant suggested to Saul

that they should consult. Furthermore, the gift given to Samuel by Saul seems to suggest that it was an accepted custom to give offerings to the seers for their services (Freeman 1971, p.31). The fact that during the time of Deborah when she functioned as a judge in Israel she used to sit under a palm tree and people came to her for judgment suggests something of the function of the seer (Mowley 1979, p 12).

According to Hobart E. Freeman (1971), the difference between the two terms lies in the fact that *nabi* stressed the objective or active work of the messenger of the Lord in speaking forth God's word, the seer, *rô'eh* on the other hand emphasized on the mode of receiving divine revelation by "seeing". In other words, the term prophet emphasized on the prophetic utterances, the term seer indicated his method of receiving the divine communication (pp.18-28).

The passage, 1 Sam 9:11-14 which says, "... make haste: he has come just now from the city because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place..." in the time of Samuel, talks about the high place, *bâmâ* which was a local shrine centered on an artificial mound or a platform in an open space outside the city (Gordon 1986, p.114). It was an area where various forms of worship took place (McCarter Jr. 1980, p.175). From the passage the people of Israel came to sacrifice to the Lord and also ate the sacrificial meal. The use of the high place later came under heavy condemnation since worst aspect of "pagan" or non-Israelite ritual was assimilated into its use (Gordon 1986, p.114). By no means an exclusive Israelite institution, it nevertheless played a major part in the religion of Israel throughout its history, and even long after completion of Solomon's temple.

Because of the tendency of the religion of the high place to assimilate some worst aspects of “pagan ritual” came under heavy fire from the prophets of the classical period (Ho 10:8, Am 7:9) and is denounced repeatedly in the books of kings (Gordon 1986, p.114).

From what has been said so far, it can be deduced that, the people of Israel had the custom of consulting Samuel, the man of God, to inquire of the Lord and as such instituted a high place as a local shrine where the people made sacrifices to God. Quite apart from that, Samuel could also inquire of the Lord on behalf of the people; intercede for the people who will be bringing their problems for directions and solutions even before they come to Samuel.

It can also be deduced that apart from the fact that Samuel made sacrifices on behalf of the nation to Yahweh and individuals also made sacrifices there at the high place Samuel might have also had his personal devotion and meditation there and received revelations of people’s cases and their solution even well ahead of time before they come. With this in mind, one can argue that it was during Samuel’s personal devotion at the high place that he received the revelation in 1 Sam 9:15 that Saul was going to come to him and consequently had all the information that must be given to Saul even before he came the following day.

In 1 Sam 9:22-27, Samuel, having the fore knowledge of who Saul was going to be, gave him a special treat and also hosted him and his servant on the rooftop until dawn. When they woke up they went to a street outskirts of the city

before sending the servant away from them so that Samuel could make known to Saul the word of God.

1 Sam 10:1 “Then Samuel then took a vial of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said ‘Has not the lord anointed you to be prince over people of Israel’”. This passage according to McCarter, Jr. (1980) indicates that anointment refers to rubbing or smearing with a sweet smelling substance. The practice involved a symbolic transfer of sanctity from the deity to an object or person and this was essentially a sacramental act (p. 178). Saul was anointed to be a prince. The Hebrew word here is *nagid*, which means “one who is raised up”, ‘elevated’, ‘made known’ or ‘singled out’. In this case, it is attributed to a king before he begins to reign. Thus the term regularly refers to the king designate or a crown prince (McCarter Jr. 1980, p.179).

One of the signs that was fulfilled was the meeting of the two men near Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah in 10:2 who would tell Saul about the place where the asses can be found and the state of mind of the people in the house. Zelzah is mentioned only here and sometimes thought to conceal an occurrence of the verb *salah*, translated “come mightily upon”. This name was probably coined after a memorable occasion of spirit possession there (Gordon 1986, p.117).

In 1 Sam 10:5, another sign that was to be fulfilled was the meeting of the band of prophets with a harp, tambourine and all kinds of instruments which might be played to induce ecstasy through which they could prophesy. In Israelite

prophecy ecstasy was produced by the power of Yahweh. Wherever ecstasy is developed as the culmination of religious experience external methods are deliberately used in order to invoke and intensify ecstasy. Most frequently used external method is music. The prophets in Gibeah whom Saul met after being anointed by Samuel came from the high place with music of diverse instrument already in a state of ecstasy (Lindblom 1973, p.79).

From the above facts, it can be conveniently said that some kind of divinatory practices through a medium or a man of God such as Samuel was in progress and that was complemented by the use of divinatory instruments by authorized or accredited men of God. These practices were normal and accepted by the people of Israel. Divinatory practices, through which the unknown and hidden issues became unveiled continued to exist to the extent that a place like Zelzah, in the territory of Benjamin, could derive its name. In this case, people might have either consulted Samuel or went to Zelzah which was close to Ramah to inquire of the Lord concerning their problems.

Another sign to be fulfilled in Saul's life was the meeting of a band or school of prophets at Gibeath-elohim where the people would play music to induce spirit possession that would enable Saul to prophesy together with the students of the school of prophets and be "turned to another man". All these signs mentioned above were fulfilled and in 1 Sam 10:12 someone who saw Saul prophesying said "Is Saul also among the prophets"? This became a proverb. From Lindblom (1973), the proverbial expression, "Is Saul also among the prophets" (1Sam 10:11) implies that the behaviour like that of the prophets was

beneath a man of good family like Saul. The question uttered by one of those who witnessed Saul's behaviour in the midst of the raving prophets (and who is their father?) suggests that the prophets were despised as of lowly and obscure origin but in times of crisis, people consulted these men of God (p.74).

In every age the faculties of receiving revelations and of uttering true oracles have been one of the most conspicuous elements in the endowment of men and women of the prophetic inclinations. It was because they possessed this faculty that the prophets of Israel came to be respected (even though they were initially despised) and became sought after by their contemporaries (Lindblom 1973, p.71). These men and women possessed the gift of divination in a particular degree to be able to tell what is happening in distant places. Israelite tradition knows also of divination which was not opposed to the religion of Yahweh. Joseph practiced cup divination (Gen. 45) which is the one mainly practiced by the Twelve Apostles' Church. At a time the Philistines came up against Israel to fight them (Israelites) and King David inquired of the Lord through the tree oracle (2 Sam 5). Such instances prove that certain forms of divination were occasionally compatible with Yahweh's religion (Lindblom 1973, p.88).

According to R.B.Y. Scott, the Hebrew word for "priest" *kohen* has as its counterpart in Arabic which means "diviner". The priest is the "holy man" like the prophet or seer. In Judges 18:1-6 the migrating Danites consult a local priest, precisely as Saul and his servant go to Samuel the seer to ask their way, in 9:8-10. The answer to a question put to the priest was obtained by the use of an ephod which appears to have been a sacred vestment with a pouch, out of which the

sacred lots called *urim* and *thummim* were cast (Scott 1971, 42). Lindblom (1973) also says that divination by means of *urim* and *thummim* was the affair of priests proper (p. 88).

From the above, it can be deduced that various divinatory processes such as the use of dreams, trance, second sight, the use of instruments such as the cup and the *urim* and *thummim* were all practiced by the people of Israel and so revealing secrets through prophetic utterance, dreams and vision can also be permitted in this era and that is exactly what most prophets in the Charismatic Churches in general and the Twelve Apostles' Church in particular are practicing.

From the passage 1 Samuel 10:17-27, it is stated as follows, "Now Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah and he said to the people of Israel, thus says the lord...therefore present yourselves before the lord by your tribes and by thousands...the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lots..."

Up to this point Saul's appointment has been kept secret in response to the earlier demand of the tribal elders (8:4-22). Samuel convenes a public assembly at which Saul can be presented as God's choice. Since the people are eager and anxious to have a king, a mere appointment by Samuel may not be accepted by the people and hence the process of election by lot which is also a divinatory process is used (Gordon 1986, p.119).

It is possible to discern the Lord's will to fall in with the wishes of the people. This is done through sacred lot. In this case there is the process of elimination from a larger entity to a smaller entity and finally the individual man.

This leads to the discovery of Saul (Hertzberg 1976, p.88). Even though Samuel knew whom God had chosen, he wanted to involve the people in choosing by the use of the lot. Samuel knew that there were people who would not agree to the choice since they had already rejected the sons that were appointed and so Samuel had to allow everybody the chance to go through the selection process so that the one chosen can be acceptable to all (Henry 2006, p.400). Casting of lots, in this case, seems to bear numerical connotation and so use more of probability where every clan is presented and given equal chances to be chosen. When the lot fell on Saul, he had then disappeared and so Samuel had to inquire of the Lord once again this time by the use of *urim and thummim* (Payne 1989, p.292).

From the story in the passage, some divinatory practices like night vision or dreams, casting of lot upon the people by presenting them in tribes and families in order to choose Saul, the use of the *urim and thummim* to know where Saul was hiding and inducing spirit possession or ecstasy through music in order to be able to speak the mind of God were all sanctioned by Samuel. From these instances, it can be said that both intuitive or mediated divination and instrumental divination (Klaus Koch's classification of divination) were practiced.

Other divinatory practices that have been used by people of God discussed earlier in other references of the Bible are the use of the divinatory cup by Joseph, and the use of tree oracle used by David. All these practices either done or supported by renowned men of God were not condemned in the various texts and so they become good examples for any individual man of God or groups of men



of God to minister in any of such particular ways according to the choice of the spirit in a man of God.

According to Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo (2006), prophets in the Charismatic Churches are regarded as people “who see”. These people can see into the future and also into the spiritual dimensions of people’s problems and provide solution to them. These prophets have the ability to interpret dreams and also receive revelations through dreams as it has been the case in Samuel’s ministry in the passage under discussion (p.66).

Receiving gifts and sacrifices from the people who come to inquire of the Lord is a practice that this passage sanctions and the tradition of consulting men of God in times of crises are also sanctioned by God in the history of the people of Israel and hence these traditions can also be inherited by both the Twelve Apostle’s Church and the Charismatic Churches.

### **Interpretation by the Twelve Apostles’ Church**

According to the interpretation of the passage by the Twelve Apostles’ Church, the story depicts that the tradition of consulting men of God was a normal practice at the time. It was a known practice at that time that people were going to Samuel for consultation and hence the servant had the idea of going to consult Samuel concerning an issue that was a mystery for the prophet to unravel (Isaac Yankey, personal communication, March 14, 2009)

According to James Blay, Mbem, (personal communication, March 13, 2009) the Twelve Apostles’ Church believes that in the story of Samuel, he had a

foreknowledge through a night vision, that Saul and the servant would be coming to him the next day before it happened. In like manner, some of the prophets of the Twelve Apostles' Church sometimes would be able to foresee some of the cases, their root causes and the remedies to those problems even before those with the cases visit the prophet the following day.

In the case of Saul and the servant going with gifts to see Samuel, it is interpreted by the people of the Twelve Apostles' Church that the *Asofo* are solely engaged in the work of God without any salary and so the people who come for consultation see it as a duty to go to the *Asofo* with gifts from their hearts. Others who consult the *Asofo* make pledges and redeem them later when they have found solutions and no specific fees are charged for consulting men or women of God or *Asofo* (John Nackabah IV, personal communication, March 24, 2009).

In the account of the passage, Saul and his servant were looking for the asses that were lost and so in the Twelve Apostles' Church, Prophet Isaac Yankey of Anibre (personal communication, March 14, 2009) explained that people who get infected with various diseases and those with various problems have their health and peace lost. In other words, diseases and problems, according to the Twelve Apostles' Church, affect people's health and peace and so such people who have their health and peace lost or misplaced, according to Prophet Isaac Yankey, "come to us so that we can find it for them". When such people go to the *Osofo*, the *Osofo* deals with the problem with the help of prayers and divination by the use of the holy cup, and through that he or she is able to find a solution for the patient. These *Asofo* of the Twelve Apostles' Church, are considered as seers

as in the case of Samuel, from the Twelve Apostles' Church' perspectives, and so people who lose their health and inheritances come to look for such seers for consultation as it is in the case of Saul and the servant.

From Prophet David Arthur (personal communication, April 10,2009), some of the divinatory practices the people of the Twelve Apostles' Church engage in are prayers, dreams and visions, divination by the use of the holy cup, placing the Bible on the head of the patient, the use of the beads (*Tasbih*) and carrying of water in a basin by the patient. All these practices are believed to be in consonance with the divinatory practice sanctioned in the passage and also in other references considered by scholars earlier on. James Blay of Mbem (personal communication, March 13. 2009) points out that the Twelve Apostles' Church believes that their main instrument used for divination is prayers and through prayers, cases are revealed in the form of dreams and visions. If prayer for the patient fails to bring revelations, the use of the cup becomes another (instrumental) type of divination and that is motivated by Joseph stories of using the cup in Gen 45 as stated earlier on.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE CONCEPT OF DIVINATION IN THE TWELVE APOSTLES’ CHURCH**

#### **Introduction**

“Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things which you have not known...” (Jeremiah 33:3) is one of the motivational messages to newly ordained *Asofo*. This is to tell them that when they call on the Lord in prayer, he will reveal to them secrets and the future to them.

In the Twelve Apostles’ Church, it is believed that the basic or fundamental component of divination is prayer through which the secrets and unknown issues of life are revealed. Whatever processes the *Asofo* undergo are done prayerfully to seek God’s help. When God answers their prayer, he reveals the source of any problem which people will bring before them and prescriptions to solve the problems. This chapter deals with the concept of divination in the Twelve Apostles’ Church.

#### **Definition**

*The New Bible Dictionary* as has been noted defines divination as the attempt to discern event distant in time or space that consequently cannot be perceived by normal means (Mashall, Millard, Packer, and Wiseman 2001,

p.279). Awuah-Nyamekye (2001) also defines divination as human attempt to know the will of the divine (pp. 3, 77).

This includes every initiative from humans to know the unknown. Some of the initiatives to know the unknown can be demonstrated in some divinatory practices by the people of Berekum traditional area that have been mentioned as follows: water and mirror gazing, carrying of the corpse, examining animal entrails, throwing a dice, prayer, dreams, meditation, getting possessed, divining by the use of stick and pot, by horn, sand and pestle and so on. Different forms of trial by ordeal is also mentioned which include walking on broken glasses barefooted, drinking boiling oil or ritually prepared concoction. The Twelve Apostles' Church in the Jomoro and Ellemele Traditional areas' concept of divination is not fundamentally different from the two definitions cited above.

“*Abisade*“, as it is called by the Nzema's in general and the Twelve Apostles' Church in the Jomoro and Ellemele Traditional areas in particular, is believed to be practiced by the Old Testament prophets to reveal the past, present and the future. Divination, from the Twelve Apostles' Church's perspective therefore, is to unfold or unveil the truth from a controversy and also to know or find out what is to come by the help of the spirit of God. Divination is also believed to help to unravel the root of any mysterious misfortunes in one's life. According to the Prophet John Nackabah IV, the administrative head of the Twelve Apostles' Church, (personal communication, March 24, 2009) divination is a way or process through which God reveals the sources of afflictions through prayers in order to save the life of people.

Furthermore, the Twelve Apostles' Church believes that it is a way of communicating with God for him to reveal the root cause of every problem and to prescribe a solution to it. From what has been said so far, divination can be defined, from the Twelve Apostles' Church's perspective as a means through which one communicates with God in times of trouble for God to answer by revealing the source and then giving direction for solution (William Wade Harris VI, personal communication, March 10, 2009).

### **Types of divination**

Divination as a means of finding the root causes of afflictions in people's lives and the remedies for them is of many kinds in the Twelve Apostles' Church. Some of them include the following: through prayers, through the use of the holy cup, through the patients carrying the basin of water, through the use of the *tasbih* or beads and also by putting the Bible on the patient's head.

Divination through prayers: Most *Asofo* of the Twelve Apostles' Church that were interviewed indicated prayer as the main means of divination in their Church. It is believed that through fervent prayers for the patient coupled with the patient's faith in God, the patient's problem may be diagnosed and what is to be done to resolve the situation (prescription). In view of this, the *Osofo* and the devotees fast and pray for the patients to have their problems solved.

During such prayers for the sick, every root cause and the direction for remedy are revealed through dreams, visions, hearing of voices, and also receiving premonitions. In such a situation, the details of the cause of the

affliction and its solution are revealed. If the affliction is as a result of a curse from any sin committed by the patient, the revelation will include a means of making amends which may include pacifying or appeasing any spirit or the ghost of a deceased that has been offended through certain sacrifices. These sacrifices are made as a compromise to bring deliverance to the patient just as the African traditionalists do.

In the course of making amends, the one wronged or aggrieved by the patient would have to be contacted for him or her to accept an apology so that whatever curse that the offended might have pronounced will be revoked. If the aggrieved is dead, the spirit would reveal exactly the location of his or her burial place so that the *Osofo* and his team will go to the graveside at midnight to ask for forgiveness from the deceased that has been aggrieved. The figure or plate in the next page shows a devotee praying under the cross.

Divination by the use of the holy cup: The information gathered from some of the *Asofo*, it is only during desperate situations that divination by the use of the holy cup is used. In such situations when a patient is brought to the “Garden” unconscious, some amount of the holy water or “david” mixed with florida water is put in the nose of the patient to resuscitate him or her before divination by the cup is done to determine whether the patient will recover in the “Garden” and also to know what to do to cure that patient.

When the *Osofo* is divining by the use of the cup, he or she first says the Lord's Prayer, asks for forgiveness of sin for both the patient and the diviner himself or herself.



**Plate 2.** *A picture showing a devotee praying for God's help concerning patients that have come to the Garden with various sicknesses*

Having o  
cup, pray



enters the water, a strong force pushes the cup of water down. When that force is felt by the *Osofo*, he or she looks into the cup. The revelation resulting from divination by the holy cup comes in different forms. For instance, some of the *Asofo* say when they feel the weight in the cup, they look into the cup and they receive the revelation in the form of visions accompanied by hearing of voices from the cup.

Others say that they do not see anything but could actually hear someone talking to them and telling them what happened and the kind of questions to ask the patient to elicit more information from the patient. From another group of *Asofo*, when the cup is raised and is weighed down, the spirit actually enters the *Osofo* and begins to talk through the *Osofo* to the hearing of the patient and anybody around to reveal the cause of the problem and to prescribe a solution to the problem. This type of divination has been illustrated in plate 3 at the next page.



**Plate 3.** Picture showing various stages of divination by the holy cup. A is Prophetess Martha Muah of Effasu fetching water for divination. In B, the Prophetess is praying over the cup containing holy water. In C, she is raising the cup to the sky. D shows the Prophetess experiencing a down push as the spirit enters the cup.

Divination by carrying a basin of water: From my observations, during the healing and deliverance services on Fridays, the patients are partially undressed and made to carry basins of water containing some amount of the holy water or

“david”. The *Osofo* and the devotees pray for the patients one by one amidst drumming, singing and dancing. The singing and dancing by the members of the Church is so passionate to induce the spirit to enter the basin of water. This then forces the evil spirit tormenting the patient to reveal the root cause of the problem and its remedy to the hearing of all the members there. Plate 4 at page 106 illustrates divination by carrying of basins of water during 2009 Easter convention at Tikobo no.1 on 10th April 2009. Some of the prophetesses seen in plate 4 are praying for the patients and some of the prophetesses are also eliciting for more information from the patients whose evil spirits tormenting them are manifesting.

Divination by the use of the *Tasbih* or the beads: The word *Tasbih* is from a Persian language Farsi which means to praise God or to pray to God and so it is consulted for divine guidance (retrieved from [www.everything2.com](http://www.everything2.com), January 16, 2010). This is the same reason why *tasbih* has been accepted by the Twelve Apostles' Church as an instrument of prayer and also used for divination. The *tasbih* or beads is a form of rosary, with deep brown colour noted to be usually used by Muslims. It was observed during Friday healing and deliverance session where a devotee, Alhaji Kaku, formerly a Muslim who got converted and has been called to train into priesthood but decided to maintain his Muslim name, was seen praying with it beside the cross. From his experience, he counts the beads with the fingers whiles praying beside the cross. During the time of such prayers, he could receive some revelation concerning some of the cases that have been

brought into the “Garden”. Plate 5 at page 107 shows Alhaji Kaku using the *tasbih* to divine.



**Plate. 4.** *A picture showing patients carrying water and manifesting the evil spirits tormenting them. The women standing beside them are listening to what the spirits are saying and eliciting for more information.*

Divination by the use of the Holy Bible: Prophetess Martha Muah of Effasu (personal communication, April 10, 2009) explained that the Bible is believed to be a powerful weapon that evil spirits are afraid of and so it can also be used in exorcism or casting out demons. This agrees with Philomena Mwaura’s (2003) findings that say that, “the African Indigenous Churches (AIC) consider the Bible to be imbued with power and the book and its words have magical properties” (p.16). Mwaura (2003) termed the above belief as “hermeneutics of mystification” (p.16).

In view of the above belief by the Twelve Apostles' Church the Bible is used here for both exorcism and divination. Prophet Isaac Yankey (personal communication, March 14, 2009) added that a Bible verse that talks about healing is read to the patient and then the Bible is placed on the head of the patient. Immediately the Bible is placed on the head of the patient, the evil spirit tormenting the patient feels tormented and begins to manifest itself by shaking the patient violently. The evil spirit is now forced to talk through the patient to reveal the root cause of the problem.



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As this is going on, the *Osofo* or any of the devotees will be trying to elicit more information from the spirit that is manifesting itself in the patient through questions. This will help reveal everything about the affliction of the patient. In

this way, whatever solution the spirit prescribes it is carefully followed for the patient's problem to be addressed. Plate 6 at page 108 illustrates a divination by the use of the Bible. Prophetess Esther Quayson of Eikwe has placed the Bible on a patient's head and the spirit tormenting the patient speaking through her and the prophetess is eliciting for more information.

### **Articles for divination**

Those who consult the *Asofo* bring gifts on their own free will. Those gifts are either brought with them when they come to consult them or make pledges and then redeem them later.



***Plate 6.*** A picture showing Prophetess Esther Quayson of Eikwe putting the Bible on a patient's head and interacting with the spirit.



As it has been pointed out earlier, the *Asofo* of the Twelve Apostles' Church do not charge a fee or collect any article from a patient who comes to them to inquire of the lord through divination, it is only when the root cause of the affliction is revealed and there is the need for any sacrifice that the articles are collected from the patient. At times some of the articles resulting from divination may include sheep, cattle, goats, packets of candles, bottles of alcoholic drinks like the 'Aperatif' for sacrifices to be performed at a particular spot to appease the spirit(s) tormenting the patient(s).

### **The meaning of divination in the Twelve Apostle Church**

The Nzema word for Divination is *Ebizal* which literally means the art of asking or making an inquiry. It connotes the idea of going to an *Osofo* who is believed to have the ability to reveal hidden things or reveal the will of the divine. People may go the *Asofo* to know the whereabouts of a missing article and also to know who is responsible for a person's misfortune and to be able to avert it (see Awuah-Nyamekye 2001, 87). The tradition of going to consult traditional priests or priestesses for any problem to be solved was normal among the Nzemas even before the Church came into existence.

The Nzemas in general believe that life is full of uncertainties and even where it is possible for some limited form of predictions or prophecies to be made about the human condition, the influence of evil forces seems to counteract or fight against such prophecies. This makes life very difficult for the people. In an attempt to unravel the root of these evil forces, the people consult the *Asofo* who

use divination to do so. It is believed that when the mystery surrounding the uncertainties is revealed, the appropriate means to deal with them could also be found. Awuah-Nyamekye (2001) has made a similar observation about the people of Berekum in the Brong-Ahafo of Ghana (p. 89).

The Twelve Apostles' Church, from investigations, believes that God is distant apart from man and so to get to God, one needs to achieve that through intermediaries (David Arthur, personal communication, April 10, 2009). This is in line with Breidenbach's (1973) research which says that "Nyame (God) himself, who is the all powerful is there but he has attendants..." (p.189ff). From the full statement made in that text, God sees everything that is happening and through angels, reveals everything to these intermediaries. These intermediaries are the *Asofo* who are able to bring solution to the people's problems through God's power (Breidenbach 1973, pp 189, 190). This was the same condition prevailing in Samuel's time where Samuel acted as an intermediary for the people of Israel and also found among the traditional Nzemas. The *Asofo* in the "Garden" are regarded by the people in the community and the patients as people 'who see' and since they could see into the future their ministries are well patronized.

The ability of the *Asofo* 'to see' is mainly received through the dreams and visions they have been having and their ability to interpret them. That ability is also received through their intuition, premonitions and through various types of divination like the use of the Bible, carrying basins of water, the use of the cup and so on discussed earlier. The art of divining by raising the cup of water to the sky is called by the people of the Twelve Apostles' Church in Nzema *Ayile {z}ll*



which means collecting medicine from the sky. This is because when the water is raised to the sky it becomes *ayile* (medicine). This medicine (*ayile*) is capable of performing wonders.

They can also see and foretell future events during spirit possession. Spirit possession is mostly invoked through the music that is played. According to Jean Buxton's (1973) research on religion and healing in Mandari, spirit possession is the means by which a source of healing power can flow through the possessed vehicle to members (p.42) and in this case the *Osofo* is the vehicle. From the researcher's observation during Friday healing services, the people play the rattles on the gourd together with the gong-gong amidst singing and dancing. This is done passionately for sometime and the spirit comes upon the *Osofo* and some of the devotees and they begin to shake violently. During this time the *Osofo* could receive visions, hear the angels talking to him or her and also speak to the people through the *Osofo* either in the local language or in other tongues which will be interpreted.

James Blay, a member of Prophet Miezah's Bonya's Garden, Mbem (James Blay, personal communication, March 13, 2009) and Pastor Saviour Ngoah, Ainyinasi (Saviour Ngoah, personal communication, March 25, 2009) remarked that people consider the use of items or articles for prayers, healing and for services (symbolic in nature ) by the Twelve Apostles' Church as African traditional practices. Even though some people try to see the African tradition as evil due to its symbolic nature, it is also line with Old Testament practices one of which is divination which is the subject under discussion. It can be observed

from this research that the Twelve Apostles' Church's use of sacred items or articles can be attributed to the authority of the Old Testament having examples of the use of sacred items like candles, incense, the *urim* and *thummim* and so on, in the temple. The above observation can be further explained from Dickson's research, mentioned earlier on, on African Religion which outlines the similarity of the Hebrew culture with that of African. In view of this it would not be surprising for the Twelve Apostle Church to identify with some of the symbolic rituals in the Old Testament which looks like that of the African traditional practice.

Divination is still relevant to the modern Christian even though it is being condemned. It is still in operation since prophets of the Charismatic Ministries reveal the past secrets and predicts the future through dreams and visions. This observation agrees with an example in Awuah-Nyamekye's (2001) research which reveals that some pastors divine by using the Bible and key (p. 124). They also bless water for people and also use olive oil or 'anointing oil' in healing as the Twelve Apostles' Church uses the 'florida water' (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006, p. 66).

The Twelve Apostles' Church's use of the passage 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 as a basis for practicing divination may be justifiable. However the question that still remains unresolved is whether they really use the Holy Spirit or not. Whether the Twelve Apostles' Church is using the spirit of God or not can only be told by the help of discernment of spirits through the Holy Spirit. From the researcher's experience as a Pastor in the Charismatic Ministry, discernment can be received

through visions, intuition and through hearing from the spirit of God and so on. This means there is no empirical method that can be used to ascertain any thing of the spirit such as mentioned above.

Twelve Apostles Church, an African Independent Church (AIC) therefore has been noted to practice divination and it is out of the AIC that the Charismatic Ministries emerged hence referred to as the Neo-Pentecostal Churches. In view of this, it has been observed to have had an influence on the Charismatic Churches. This might be in line with Deji Ayegboyin's (2006) assertion that "the soil more often than not influences the growth of plants" (p.38), meaning that the Twelve Apostles' Church being the soil has influenced the plants which are the Charismatic Ministries.

The difference between the divination of the Twelve Apostles' Church and that of the Charismatic Ministry is that the former uses both instruments like the cup, and the Bible in divination and also through visions, dreams and intuition while the latter mostly uses dreams and vision alone. This agrees with Koch's classification of divination into instrumental divination and mediated divination mentioned earlier in this study.

In conclusion, divination deals with finding root causes of afflictions in people's lives and the remedies for them. This is done through prayers, the use of the holy cup, carrying of basins of water, use of the *tasbih* and the use of the Bible. The *Osofo* consulted does not charge any fee but only receive gifts from

patients. Divination is the art of making an inquiry and when the mysteries are revealed the appropriate means to deal with them could be found.

**CHAPTER SIX**  
**DIVINATION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN THE TWELVE APOSTLES’**  
**CHURCH**

**Introduction**

Divination from the perspective of the members Twelve Apostles’ Church as stated in the previous chapter is a means of communicating to God and as he answers, reveals secrets and provides solutions. The types of divination practiced by the Church are to help unravel the root cause of problems and offer solutions to them. Divination therefore has been very relevant to the people of the Twelve Apostles’ Church as a whole and the Nzema society in particular.

**The relevance to religious life**

According to Prophet Isaac Yankey, (personal communication, March 14, 2009) the ability to know and to unravel any secret behind any ailment comes from God and so there is much demand placed on every *Osofo* to be committed to more prayers in order to be able to deal with the problems that the patients bring. People come to the *Asofo* of the Twelve Apostles’ Church desperately in search of what Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) has termed as practical salvation and as they come they must find solution to their problems (p.19).

From Prophet David Arthur of Bonyere Junction's, (personal communication, April 10, 2009) experience in ministry, divination increases the faith of the *Osofo*. Right from the training period of the *Osofo* till he or she graduates the *Osofo* witnesses a lot of healings of serious diseases in the "Garden". This past experiences continue to stir up the faith of the *Osofo* to the extent that by the time he or she starts his or her ministry, his or her faith in the healing power of God has grown. The only thing left for the *Osofo* to do is to divine to know whether it is the will of God for the patient to be healed or not.

It is believed that every power to heal diseases and to be able to solve problems brought by the patients is from God and as such places a demand on the *Osofo* to stay more close to God in prayer, and in obedience to the word of God. This closeness to God increases the *Osofo*'s ability to heal and to solve problems.

The *Asofo* have also realized that any time the spirit has led them in finding solutions, there has been success and so they are always anxious to seek the leading of the spirit. In this case, he or she becomes more and more aware of how weak humankind can be without the help of God. This attitude brings the *Osofo* closer to God everyday. In view of the above, the *Osofo* becomes conscious of avoiding sin and tries to keep him or herself pure so that he or she can attract the presence of the spirit any time he or she prays. This has helped to produce a more Christian piety in the *Asofo* of the Twelve Apostles' Church. With this consciousness, the *Asofo* ask for forgiveness for themselves and also for the patients before they hold the cup (Esther Quayson, personal communication, April 10, 2009).

## **The relevance of divination to the socio-moral life of members of the Twelve Apostles' Church**

It has been observed over the years in the “Garden” of the Twelve Apostles’ Church that many of the patients who are brought there have been suffering from various diseases discovered to be curses placed on them (Christba, personal communication, March 13, 2009). On this issue, Prophetess Christba (personal communication, March 13, 2009) explained that some of the causes of these curses may come from the patients stealing, cheating on someone, having illicit affair with someone’s wife or husband or any kind of wrong doing. Due to the gravity of such diseases brought to the “Garden”, it has helped to instill some kind of fear which deters many members of the Twelve Apostles’ Church from doing those things that will bring the curses.

When one becomes a diviner, one receives the ability to see beyond the ordinary and this ability raises one to an honourable status in society. Whenever an *Osofo* receives honour in society he or she becomes careful of the kind of life he or she leads. He or she is supposed to lead a life worthy of emulation in society.

Members of the Twelve Apostles’ Church believe that angels visit the “Garden” in the night to minister healing to the sick patients and one of the prerequisites of attracting them is to observe constant good sanitation in the “Garden”. Due to this belief, it has been their tradition that the members and the inmates of the “Garden” to keep the “Garden” tidy. For instance, they sweep the

“Garden” twice a day. This practice in the “Garden” has become part and parcel of their ethos and has been extended to their homes which go to improve the sanitation condition in their homes.

From the researcher’s observation during the period of 1980-1990 in Nzema area, there were very few hospitals and health posts and the roads in the area were also very bad and almost inaccessible and as such making it difficult and expensive for the vehicles to get to the few health centers. In those days, health insurance had not been implemented and some of the women could not bear the cost of the medical bills and were forced to stay at home to deliver their babies. During those periods most of these women who delivered at home without any assistance developed a lot of complications. This made some of the prophetesses to act as Traditional Birth Attendants to help pregnant women to deliver their babies. Their role as birth attendants made delivery of babies convenient and less expensive and also the prophetesses who assisted the women in labour readily availed themselves even at odd times when they were called upon.

Until very recently women played a passive and supportive role in the mission churches. However through divination where the spirit sometimes decides to choose a woman instead of a man, the status of women both in the Church and the society has been raised. In this Church, women are being given the opportunity to exercise authority or given a place in leadership role in the Church.



### **Relevance of divination to their economic life**

*Asofo* of the Twelve Apostles' Church believe that Jesus healed people freely without charging and so, no *Osofo* is supposed to charge anything for healing. In other words, Jesus gave the gift of healing freely and so the *Asofo* must also do the same. In view of this, people who consult any *Osofo* consider it as a duty from their hearts to either bring along gifts whenever they consult them or make pledges and redeem them after they receive solutions to their problems (Sarah Ackah, personal communication, March 24, 2009). James Blay (personal communication, March 13, 2009), a member of Prophet Bonya's branch of the Church in Mbem "Garden", testified about someone who built the shed in the "Garden" to show appreciation for his child who was cured of a terrible disease. Prophet James Ak[ss] (personal communication, March 13, 2009) of Tikobo no.1 also testified to a similar fact that he has been able to put up his building to the lentil level through several donations from the people who sought his help.

The Twelve Apostles' Church is not paying any *Osofo* so when one is enrolled into priesthood, one is allowed to stay and establish his or her ministry at a place chosen by the newly ordained *Osofo* where he or she can engage in various businesses to support the ministry. In view of this, some of the *Asofo* who are engaging in farming are mostly helped by the devotees and members of the Church. This provides the *Asofo* with free labour that enhances their economic activities.

It is also believed that as the *Asofo* are devoted to the ministry, they receive the blessing of God upon themselves and their children. According to *Osofo* Christba, (personal communication, March 13, 2009) whatever business she has been doing including that of her children have been prosperous. Such prosperity has been seen in her textile business and that of the daughter and the transport business of the husband.

### **Impact of divination on church growth**

The work of healing and deliverance through divination brings a lot of people to the Church. When people come to receive their healing they tell others what God has done for them so that those people who will hear the testimonies could come to witness that in the Church. Some of the people who come to the “Garden” to receive the healing actually become members and hence increasing the numerical strength of the Church. As the years go by, more people are being trained into priesthood. As more people are becoming *Asofo*, they go out to establish their “Gardens” which become branches of the Church and thereby expanding the Church.

Due to the growth in the number of people in the church a number of projects have been introduced. For instance in Essiama, the Church has started a preparatory school which is at the nursery level. The majority of these school children are made up of the children of members of the Church. This will in future raise the educational level of members and those members will be capable of

teaching members the doctrine of the church. This is a long term church growth strategy not only in numerical sense, but also in spiritual sense.

In spite of the relevance of divination as discussed, there are certain perceptions from a lot of quarters that make the mere mention of the word divination offensive in the ears of people. The concept of divination has also got certain negative impact on society which makes that unacceptable. Some of these are discussed below.

Firstly, since the Twelve Apostles' Church is the first African Indigenous Church (AIC) in Ghana, those early missionaries created the impression in people that consulting *Asofo* is a "fetish" practice and so going to them became ungodly. This impression has been so strong that whenever one mentions the word divination, what comes to mind is a practice meant for magicians, traditional priests and oracles of family gods and evil spirits. This attitude comes from the negative perception of the African Tradition Religion by the foreign missionaries and their churches.

Secondly, when the truth about someone behind a patient's predicament is revealed in divination those that have been offended in the process become angry and react violently towards the offender. Some offended people go to the extent of threatening the life of the offenders. This has led to litigations, antagonism and conflicts in families and so many people frown on the tradition of consulting the *Asofo* of the Twelve Apostles' Church.

Thirdly, many *Asofo* do not have any formal education and so cannot even read the Bible. Since they cannot read, they do not understand or cannot explain the very things they do let alone to support their practice with scriptures. This allowed other people who do not even know what is being done in the “Garden” to subject their practice to misinterpretations. Now that some of them have already entered the universities and attending Bible training school established in Kormantse by the Twelve Apostles’ Church, it is hoped that they will be able to correct some erroneous impressions that have already been made about the Church.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary and conclusion

The main task of this study was to evaluate the use of the Bible by the Twelve Apostles' Church of Ghana as a basis for divination using Jomoro and Ellemble Traditional areas as a case study. In the course of this investigation, the practices and the doctrines of the Church were examined. Quite apart from these, the biblical interpretation of the passage mentioned above was analyzed. In addition to these, the concept of divination and its relevance to the Twelve Apostles' Church and the entire modern Christian were also examined. From the study the following conclusions and recommendations are made.

The first wave of Pentecostal Christianity began in Africa as a result of the rise of African prophets. Some of those prophets were William Wade Harris and John Swatson. Some of these prophets did not establish churches but due to the impact of their ministries, their converts formed churches which were believed to have continued the ministry of these prophets. The Twelve Apostles' Church of Ghana was founded by John Nackabah and Grace Tane who came from African traditional religious background but got converted by Prophet William Wade Harris into Christianity.

They first began their ministry with the power of the Holy Spirit as the prophet handed to them, winning more souls for the Methodist Church. Later the Church was reluctant to accept John Nackabah and Grace Tane and their followers and so they had to come out of the Methodist Church to form their church called the Twelve Apostles' Church.

The Church fashioned their ministry according to the practices of Prophet William Wade Harris like wearing of white gown, and the use of certain sacred items mentioned below but the practice of divination did not originate from the Prophet.

The study revealed that the Twelve Apostles' Church uses certain items like rattles on the gourd as an African musical instrument, water for healing and cleansing, the Moses' staff, candles, red and white threads, incense, white and red clothes, gong-gong, erect crosses on the compound of their "Gardens" etc.

This study revealed that the rattles on the gourd and the gong-gong are played for the people to sing and dance. The songs passionately sung by the people produce ecstasy which induces spirit possession through which prophetic revelations are made.

It was also found out that they preach from the Methodist local preachers' manual and use the liturgy during Sunday services since the founders were Methodists and were used to them. They believe in the birth and also the death of Jesus Christ which is portrayed by the cross erected on the compound as a symbol of power in his death. They also believe that the Holy Spirit is their source of

power for ministry. They believe in the ministry of angels to the sick so there is a cistern of water called “david” on the compound which angels come to stir at night which becomes efficacious in curing diseases and all evil spirits.

From the study, it came to light that the Twelve Apostles’ Church believes in the concept of divination which is mainly motivated by the story of the loss of Saul’s father’s asses in 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26 and supported by the story of Joseph’s cup in Genesis 45:4, 5, and many other scriptures some of which have been mentioned in the discussion above. The Church defines divination as the means of communication with God for him to reveal the root cause of every problem and to prescribe a solution to it. With this understanding, prayer was noted to be the main type of divination in the Church.

Concerning the interpretation of the passage 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26, the Twelve Apostles’ Church believes that Samuel had the fore knowledge of the mission of Saul and his servant in a night vision before they came to him and hence most of the *Asofo* are receiving fore knowledge of some cases before those cases get to them. It was also observed that the *Asofo* do not charge any fee for their services but the patients owe it as their duty to bring gifts along with them during consultation or make pledges which are redeemed later on.

From the study, the *Asofo* are considered as seers by the people and so all those afflicted by diseases are considered to have their health and peace lost. In view of this, the people come to the “seers” to search for them. For this reason, it

is justifiable for people to visit the *Asofo* and hence also right for people to visit the prophets of the Charismatic Ministries in times of crises.

The study revealed that the *Osofo* acts as a diviner who inquires from the Lord for the patient to reveal the root cause of problems and to prescribe solution. This agrees with the biblical scholars' position that the Hebrew word *kohen*, a priest and having a counterpart in Arabic which also means a diviner. This means that the priest or priestess or prophet or prophetess who is the *Osofo* in both the Twelve Apostles' Church and Pastor or Prophet in the Charismatic Ministries must divine to inquire of the Lord concerning a patient's case.

According to some interpretations of the passage by biblical scholars, consultation of men of God and sending gifts to them was a normal practice at the time of Samuel. It was also viewed as a token of greetings and respect to the man of God.

Evaluating the passage, 1 Samuel 9:1-10:26, an example from the Bible, three different instances of divination by Samuel can be observed. Firstly, Samuel received the message about Saul and the servant in a dream the previous night in order to tell Saul the mind of God. Secondly the king of Israel was chosen by casting of lots which fell on Saul and thirdly when Saul hid himself, Samuel inquired of the Lord in order to locate him by using *urim* and *thummim*. From these instances, it can be said that both intuitive or mediated divination and instrumental divination are practiced here.



It was also observed from the study that the Twelve Apostles' Church practice divination through dreams and visions, declaring message through a medium which are all intuitive type of divination and then the use of the holy cup, *tasbih*, patients carrying the Bible and carrying of basins of water which are instrumental divination. These practices are in line with the three instances of divination revealed in the passage and therefore justifying.

The study revealed that the Twelve Apostles' Church being regarded as demonic and the negative attitudes and perceptions people have about the Church were from the beginning of the Church. This was done by those missionaries who were in the country at the time of its inception. This might be the reason for the negative comments from them. This is the same attitude that the western missionaries had towards African culture and traditional religion

The fact that the practices of the Twelve Apostles' Church are found in the African Traditional Religion does not make the members less Christians. From the research it was revealed that the Hebrew or Jewish culture has a lot of similarities with the African culture so the Twelve Apostles' Church has identified with the Old Testament tradition and has built a theology from that. Jesus Christ is not only for the western missionaries but also for the African culture and as such his message must be presented in an African world view. This is the path the Twelve Apostles' Church has taken and must be well appreciated.

From the above the question that should be answered is that was it right for the missionaries whose point of view emphasized on logical reasoning and disregarding anything supernatural to have given judgments on issues which are only discerned by the help of the spirit of God? This is a question that needs further investigation.

From the discussions so far, it can be said that divination is relevant both to the Twelve Apostles' Church and the entire modern Christians. The relevance of divination to the religious life is that divination increases faith, prayer life and consciousness of sin and the leading of the spirit.

Its relevance to socio-moral life is such that there is the fear of being cursed as a result of any wrong doing. This fear helps to reform society. Many of the prophetesses act as Traditional Birth Attendants helping in delivery of children especially at places where there are no hospitals and clinics.

The relevance of divination to the church is seen in the growth of the Twelve Apostles Church in the sense that many people who receive solutions to their problems from the *Asofo* join the Church and hence increasing the membership of the Church.

Divination is still relevant to the modern Christian even though it is being condemned. It is still in operation since prophets of the Charismatic Ministries reveal the past secrets and predicts the future through dreams and visions. A lot of people both Christians and non-Christians go to these prophets for consultation

and some eventually become their members. This is also increasing church growth in the Charismatic Ministries.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made. Firstly, it was observed during the study that the main setback of the Church is the low level of education of most of the *Asofo*. Since the majority of them do not have formal education, they cannot teach their members and the devotees the word and be able to explain the practices, supporting them with biblical passages. In view of this, people outside the Twelve Apostles' Church say all kinds of negative things about the Church. In order to reverse this trend, it is recommended that, intensive in-service training on the word in local languages must be organized from time to time for the *Asofo* who are already in the ministry and for those who are in training. This could be done for a period of time before being ordained. This will enable them to teach the word of God and also explain the Church's doctrine to its members and those who come to seek help from them.

Secondly, the way to achieve the above aim is that some of the members who have formal education should be encouraged to become *Asofo* and may even enroll in the recognized seminaries and Bible Schools so that after their training, they will have the capacity to teach the word in the "Gardens" and to explain their doctrine to the general public.

Thirdly, the researcher's observation is that many people do not know much about the doctrines of the Church and hence the misconception about the

Church. So it is recommended that the doctrines or the teachings of the Church especially the basis for its practice of divination be explained to the general public through the media (radio, television etc) or outreach programmes or crusades for the general public to know what they believe in. The above has the potentiality to address some of the misconceptions about the Church particularly the practice of divination.

Fourthly, in order to avoid the patients becoming angry and violent towards those the *Asofo* reveal to be responsible for the patient's plight, the *Asofo* should try and conceal such information and only focus on the solutions for peace and harmony to prevail in their patient's families.

Fifthly, due to the way some missionaries treated the African prophets and allowed their converts to form a Church that is being looked down on, it can be recommended that there are a lot of such people who are in desperate need of sound teachings so those who are believed be knowledgeable in the Christian teachings and practices must do well to go and look for them to be able to help them and not to reject them or despise them.

Sixthly, from the research, those who consider themselves good Christians must not only sit and criticize or give any negative comments about those who are believed to have wrong teachings or weak. What the good Christians can do is to make the effort to go to the weak people to find out any opportunity to help them to correct some erroneous teachings.

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APPENDIX 1  
RESEARCH QUESTION/QUESTIONAIRES

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS FOR THE PROPHETS/PROPHETESSES

PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENT

(1) Name  Male  Female

(2) Marital Status  Single  Divorce  Married   
Widow

(3) Type of Marriage  Monogamy  Polygamy  
 Traditional  Customary  Christian

(4)Town/ Village

(5)Name of Garden

(6) Role or Occupation in the Garden

(7) Previous Occupation before initiation or ordination

QUESTION 1

Questions about the Perspective and interpretation of the story in

1 Sam 9-10:26

- 1) What are the main biblical passages that support your concept of divination?
- 2) What is your understanding or interpretation of the story in 1 Sam 9-10:26?
- 3) What made you think that the story is supporting the concept?
- 4) Why do you collect articles or a fee from those who come to consult you?
- 5) What are some of the doctrines or teachings of your church?

## QUESTION 2

Questions about the motivation and call

- 1) How long have you been working as a prophet/ prophetess in this Garden?
- 2) Why did you decide to become a prophet/ prophetess?
- 3) How did you receive your call?

## QUESTION 3

Questions about the Training and initiation or ordination into the Priesthood

- 1) Where were you trained?
- 2) Who trained you or took you through the training programme?

- 3) What are some of the training activities did you go through during your training?
- 4) What are some of the articles required during your ordination or initiation?
- 5) Can you describe how you were ordained into the priesthood?
- 6) What are the qualifications for someone to be ordained or initiated?

#### QUESTIONS 4

##### Questions about Consultation or Divination

- 1) In the view of your church, what is divination?
- 2) Would you please mention the types of divination you practice?
- 3) Can you describe the various methods of divination that you practice here?
- 4) What groups of people come here for consultation?
- 5) What type of problem do they bring?

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR THE DEVOTEES OR TRAINEES

PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENT

- (1) Name  Male  Female
- (2) Marital Status  Single  Divorce  Married  Widow
- (3) Type of Marriage  Monogamy  Polygamy
- Traditional or customary  Christian
- (4) Town/ Village
- (5) Name of Garden
- (6) Role or Occupation in the Garden
- (7) Previous Occupation before initiation or ordination
- (8) Reason for being in the Garden

QUESTION 1

Question for the motivation for receiving the training

- 1) Why are you getting the training?
- 2) How long have you been staying in this Garden?
- 3) What attracted you to accept the challenge to be trained?
- 4) How do you finance yourself and family since you are not paid?

5) What are some of the activities do you undertake as a trainee?

6) What are some of the signs that proved to you that you have been called to train as a prophet/prophetess?

## QUESTION 2

### Questions about Ordination or Initiation process

1) What are the qualifications for someone to receive training?

2) Do you present some articles or pay fees in order to begin training?

3) How long does a devotee spend in training?

4) What are some of the procedures do you follow during initiation or ordination?

APPENDIX 2 PICTURES OF SOME SACRED ITEMS



**Plate 7.** *A picture showing some sacred items. A= rattles on the gourd as a musical instrument. B=sheep skin on which the prophetess kneels for prayers*



*Plate 8. A pictures showing the temple and some sacred items in Galilee Garden in Bonyere. A= the cross. B = the 'Holy Spirit'. C= the Galilee Temple. D= 'David'. E= a dwarf wall around the cross indicating a restricted area*